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MOLIÈRE

AND HIS

MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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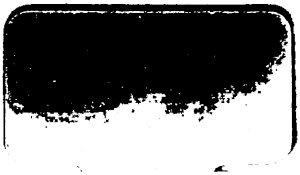

MOLIÈRE

AND HIS

MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

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AND HIS

MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

GLIMPSES

OF THE COURT AND STAGE—THE FACULTIES

AND PHYSICIANS OF THE *GRAND SIÈCLE.*

BY

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PREFACE.

THE object in publishing this work is to supply the English lover of Molière—medical or other—with some special information on that writer and his writings, the need of which must frequently be felt.

Though, like Shakespeare, Molière is read and appreciated in every language, it is surprising that of his studious admirers out of France, none have thought of treating of him from perhaps the only point of view where there is still remaining something to be said—that is, of him in his relations to medicine.

Assuredly Molière's medical antipathies have not escaped notice, his numerous compatriot biographers and critics have not failed to give it prominence when treating of his censures of the doctors of his day. Raynaud, Dufresne-Favconneaut, Chereau, and Magnin, for example, have contributed to the subject, M. Raynaud more particularly. This writer, by his "Médecins au Temps de Molière," must render any one his debtor who follows in his wake.

The estimate of Molière and his medical prejudices as here set forth accords with that of the writers mentioned; and with them it is admitted the poet's judgment of the doctors of the Faculty

is far from flattering. That verdict general opinion has, however, confirmed; for it is commonly admitted that that which was attacked deserved to be, and it might be added that even had the *comique* erred it would now be too late to put him right. The decisions of genius, it is said, are without appeal.

It may be observed that, while no defence of the doctors is here attempted, it is clearly recognised that the motives which actuated the poet in his raids upon them are not so evident as might at first appear. Doubtless the medical absurdities of which Molière was witness sufficiently explain the manner of his ridicule. As a satirist more than as a comedian, he laughed at their pretensions, but the causes of the persistence and severity of his railleries remain obscure.

This enigma, grave and gay, of Molière's life it is now attempted impartially to elucidate, and it must be admitted that in the investigation the *grand comique* loses nothing of our esteem: on the contrary, as a man, he wins our sympathy, and we feel that we can never know too much of his personality and inner thought.

A. M. B.

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

THE literature that France has devoted to her *grand comique* is voluminous and varied. The study and research bestowed on everything relating to the poet leaves little to be discovered; to the world, his life and works are a common property, and though we may not be at all times in his confidence, he is none the less our friend and intimate. If some things that might strengthen this acquaintance are contested, there is one, at least, which all are perfectly agreed upon, that is his opinion with regard to medicine. The pretensions of this science Molière openly denounces, and in this particular offers to his admirers a subject singularly interesting as a special study. The spirit of his critique is unquestionably severe. Can the fallacies of medicine, past or present, justify the prejudice, or must we seek the cause in the nature of Molière's character and genius? The mystery is difficult to solve, and opens up a wide field of biographical and critical inquiry.

To realise the position of the comic poet and of that profession which he so pointedly assails, let the doctor of our day in fancy place himself in the Paris of 1668. There, in active practice and a member of the hallowed faculty of medicine, he would know the Sieur Guy Patin, an acquaintance which would do him honour, for he was Dean of the Faculty and a

noted letter writer, at an epoch the most literary France has ever known. Like Patin, our doctor's grave and learned calling might not admit of visiting the theatre, nevertheless he would naturally feel interested in the intellectual movements of the day; he would hear a certain Molière spoken of, a comedian excommunicate like his fellows, a *valet-de-chambre* to the king, and a writer of plays, immoral some say—sublime as Boileau thinks. Like Patin, our practitioner might also look into one of the poet's comedies, and in a celebrated *placet* fall upon these lines, apologetic of his art, "I own at times that comedy is corrupt. What is there in this world not subject to abuse? There is nothing, however innocent in itself, men may not render mischievous: no art, however salutary, they may not misdirect; nothing, however good, they may not turn to evil purpose. For example, medicine is a useful art, and all revere it as one of the most excellent, nevertheless we find it sometimes dangerous, and a means of poisoning others." The passage read, Tartuffe is thrown aside with the remark, "The author is a miserable scribbler," and the reader thinks no more of him. Time has changed all this; the doctor, as a practitioner of the present day, knows the writings of the caustic Dean Guy Patin, as also those of the comedian. Which of the two has left undying fame as a writer, critic, and instructor? Molière—such is the progress made in the course of time. But progress had begun even before the younger Poquelin changed his name and lent his genius and artistic talent to its cause.

When Molière entered on his mission France was at peace and Mazarin at rest; the nobles, now submissive vassals, surrounded their young and gallant monarch with the exalted love and admiration which distinguished his court. Literature and art, encouraged by a material prosperity, aided in embellishing a reign whose charm they principally constitute. While the courtiers flattered royalty, competing for its favours, the high officials of the State enriched themselves; the magistracy dispensing justice, often sold it; the *grandes dames* flirted and made love, converting gallantry into a fine art. The age was one of change, equally removed from barbarous crudeness and insipid uniformity. The distinctions between titled rank and *bourgeois* affluence were disturbed, hereditary prudery and simplicity were giving place to modern coquetry, frivolity, and fashion. In every condition of the social scale each strove to rise above the level of his sphere, blaming in others the spirit in which he himself shared; hence sprang up a crowd of contrasts and dramatic oppositions in every relation of human life, which furnished inexhaustible materials for satire and the comic muse.

In the scientific world it was the same. The spirit of inductive philosophy and the experimental method under different names were actively at work and struggling for a foothold. The pioneers of modern thought assailed the seats of learning from without, while within the Universities were at feud amongst themselves. Descartes establishing a basis of certitude, enunciates his beautiful demonstration of per-

sonality, and offers farther problems of a physical and moral order. Gassendi, more practical and positive in his teaching, opposes a salutary counterpoise to the geometric methods and abstractions of his glorious rival; dominant Aristotelianism is endangered; Montpelier has shaken off its fetters, and the Sorbonne, though not without regret, has ventured into new paths.

But the positive as well as the speculative absorbs the attention of the learned; they occupy themselves with physiology. There is scarcely a work, however limited, emanating from this class, that does not treat the subject together with anatomy, so far as they are known to them. The mysteries of vitality were reviewed with freedom, for no one entertained the thought of placing between the study of mind and matter that absolute distinction which in many points seems so inseparable to us now. The reigning spiritualism, self-contained, was free from all alarm; both ends of the chain, as Bossuet expresses it, were so firmly held, none need fear to examine the intermediate links. The only danger of thought lay in clashing with antiquity, for its authorities were still supreme, and new investigations touched on many points, the views drawn from them and held as sacred.

Of all the liberal arts and sciences medicine had most to apprehend from the general movement and conflict of ideas. In an institution vigorously organised, and where category, form, and substance, with their scholastic settings, were held in reverential

honour, this was not surprising. The renowned Faculty of Paris observed with great suspicion the inroads daily made by the new light upon a system hallowed by the course of centuries. Mystic doctrines were on the wane; the discoveries of Harvey, Aselli, and Picquet were gaining ground; alchemy was divorced from chemistry; novel and valuable remedies were being added from the old world, as also from the new. A change was taking place in the manners and ideas of the practitioners themselves. An outcry for medical reform was the order of the day, the surgeons were asserting their independence, justly merited and long denied them; the barbers were also loud in their pretentions, and even the apothecaries showed that they were conscious of unfair disabilities, of grievances in common with a thousand others that required the coming revolution to redress. Everywhere the work of renovation arising from the contest between the old school and the new was in active operation.

In all this play of party strife, social as well as scientific, Molière found himself, perhaps unconsciously, powerfully aiding in the general spirit of advancement. He marked the traditionary notions and the scientific verbiage which the scholastic pedants persisted in maintaining, though elsewhere they were growing obsolete. He exposed in the doctors of philosophy their mania for logical discussion, in and out of season, and he ridiculed in those of medicine their inflated reverence for Hippocrates and Galen. The latter, however, were his worthiest antagonists. Their *esprit-de-corps*, so rancorous and narrow, their maca-

ronic jargon, and their method were inviting, though not alone sufficient for the rapier-thrust of the comedian; he went beyond all this, choosing from medicine its representatives; he made them serve him as models; he seized on their personalities, he painted them as they lived, embracing the whole order in his raillery. It would almost seem there was a prejudice to be satisfied as well as a comedy to be drawn from what he saw in those who learnedly professed to cure disease.

From what we know of these types and their practice, perhaps it would be rash to assert that Molière either in art or feeling is betrayed into exaggeration. But we who are removed by centuries from the contest may safely do justice now to the worthy ancestry in question. While willingly saluting the representatives of progress and the future, even in the Faculty itself, which personifies the spirit of conservatism, we meet with efforts sincere though blind, faithful though isolated, in passing onward to a change that was inevitable. As obstinate partisans of resistance, we find its members conscientious in their systematic immobility, honest notwithstanding all their faults and failings, and we are naturally indulgent as we regard them as struggling to retain hold of a system that is slipping from their grasp; their manners and opinions are no longer ours, their stereotyped ideas astonish us, their petty jealousies and rivalries we cannot enter into, yet they are so simple and respectable withal, that they excite a kindly feeling in the mind; although we laugh to see them in the comedy, their society

possesses something that is pleasing. In fact, we wish to meet with them again.

While Molière himself excites these sentiments and sympathies, it must be owned that he was far from sharing them. The art and its professors are the subjects of his evident hostility. As has been happily remarked, he gave them battle in five regular engagements, besides countless skirmishes, and closing his career in the Malade Imaginaire he fell, fighting in the breach. Curiosity is naturally awakened by these facts. What reason moved him to assume this attitude? The explanation must be sought, it would appear, in the mental and physical condition of the man himself. The feelings, amounting to conviction, must have had some surer bases than those of pleasantry or profit. The enmity, it has been alleged, arose from the circumstance of prolonged ill-health; he could find no remedy nor solace for his sufferings. A critic, deeply read in his character and genius, goes so far as to affirm that precisely because he felt himself condemned to suffer, we find him in revolt against the claims of medicine, and with a bravado of incredulity preferring to lead the feeble remnant of existence according to his tastes and passions. This view may be somewhat extreme, but a careful study of his life and writings shows there is much to substantiate it.

In treating of the poet's medical antipathies, it may be observed that his vein of satire was not sudden in its evolution, indeed this applies to the spirit of his genius generally. Though Molière's first essays had their *docteurs ridicules*, his finest regular comedies were

written before the anti-medical dramas appeared. In the interval the *précieux, facheux* and *bourgeois* had in turn been summoned to the footlights, although in no satiric spirit. The treatment of the Courtier-class is rather amusing than severe, the *marquis* he perhaps allows to pass too gently; still, to his honour be it said, though moving in the Courtier-circle, and a favourite with the Monarch, he was no worshipper of class distinctions, nor could he be considered democratic, as that was foreign to his nature. He was the *bourgeois-frondeur* type of character, independent, and little sympathetic with the feudal feeling still existing—a feeling often as mean as great. He might have been the French Cervantes, had the services of a Don Quixote been required; but in humbling the nobles and establishing royal supremacy Richelieu had rendered this unnecessary; real or fictitious, little of the chivalric remained. The *marquis* and aspirants, therefore, offered small material for his powers, and consequently suffer lightly. His efforts were reserved, as we have seen, for a past existing in the present of another kind; the Faculty of Medicine, its spirit, forms, and usages, which had outlived their age, formed a subject much more worthy of his craft, and truly he allowed the theme to test his ingenuity. He first burlesqued, then ridiculed them, and carrying his assaults further, he attacked their art and science. And here his method of attack altogether changed, the spirit of the satire thence becomes direct and unrelenting, a cherished antipathy seems to take possession of him, he revels in the mockery and jest with

which he deluges the subject, creating scenes unnecessary to his plots, and superfluous unless to amuse and excite the laughter of his audiences.

But Molière is not always consistent with himself, and this feature may be regarded in another light. He appears at times far from convinced of what he so forcibly advances. More than once, we shall see him abandoning himself submissively to medical treatment and regimen, both formal and severe. He likewise numbered among his friends members of the Faculty itself, who shared his confidence and furnished him with the technical material he so happily made use of. Facts such as these, strictly biographic and reliable, form an important element in the inquiry, and if properly applied, may be found to modify the graveness of the charges raised, where those he takes to task in turn become the critics.

Let us now proceed with the medical examination of his life and genius. Considered thus, Molière forms a study of the greatest pathological as well as psychological value, and should for a full appreciation of his works be carefully studied from this point of view. In the choice and treatment of his subject it is generally admitted his physical and mental qualities disclose themselves. This is most observable in the comedies, where medicine and its votaries are brought upon the scene, and for the present these alone concern us.

MOLIÈRE

AND HIS

MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

BEFORE proceeding with our subject, it may be asked what really was the condition of science, as represented by the doctors that Molière attacked. If we turn to the record of the seventeenth century, a glance at the domain of medicine will clearly show us.

The spirit of investigation which was to create the world anew had not yet acquired a name; but none the less was it actively awakening doubts in doctrine. It began now to be understood that antiquity had not bequeathed to us in everything a perfectly complete ideal, that after Aristotle and Hippocrates had done their best, something still remained to be achieved. A movement, speculative and confused, was rapidly invading all the Schools in Europe, and though with no immediate profit, tending to overthrow the system that had outlived its time. In France Montpellier was the first to yield; Paris, more difficult to win, and refusing all concession to the spirit of the age, thought to stem the current and survive in peace and honour. The resistance of its Faculty excites a lively interest even now, and not without good reason. Fortified as it was by immemorial rights and privileges, and furnished with all the means of defence and attack,

it might seem that there was little to be apprehended from adversaries, single-handed or combined—but this was a vain illusion. The time had come when the attitude could no longer be maintained; the method and the nature of the enemy alike were changed. Progress was a spirit, and ridicule an arm, which nothing could withstand, and both were now working in active co-operation. The first, long the dream of individual thinkers, was at this stage rapidly assuming more tangible form, whilst the second, taking higher aim, promised powerful aid in bringing about the change that was inevitable.

Among the various elements with which antiquity enriched the contest, comedy had not till now been thought of. It had done good service in satirizing the fallacies of physic when Rome was a Republic, but looked at through a past of fifteen centuries it was not in this direction that the lessons which it taught were prized. It was perhaps the last of all the sources whence danger was to be expected. The lurking spirit of antagonism that survived the classics, passing from age to age into the mediæval burlesques and tirades of the *médecins ambulants* of later date, was as far beneath the notice of the Faculty as the Passion-Play profanities were unworthy the attention of the Holy See. As the drama itself felt the awakening influence of the new impulses, like everything else, its earlier efforts of revival were already past, and now the playful wit of Plautus and Terence were again about to be applied in the direction of the healing art to hasten the process of transition.

It was to the grand comique the classic mask should pass, and who could be more worthy of the favour? Our poet, as we shall see, from the philosophic nature of his studies and the artistic mission in which he enrolled himself, was admirably adapted to do battle with the world of medical delusion and its learned professors. At the historic stage at which comedy came to the front as an assailant of the Faculty, the science and ability of the veteran corps was on all hands being challenged as an arrogant monopoly. Internal dissension and desertion made alarming progress, which circumstance greatly favoured the designs of our comic poet, and goes far to explain the marvellous success of his medical pieces, especially with popular audiences, which always delight in the droll impersonation of a privileged class whose manners are pompous and full of assumption. Even the more enlightened, with their growing scepticism in matters both of theology and morals, could not resist the charms of this attack.

To have in view the large and complex field to which our poet's admirable critique applies, it will be well to note the chief points of agitation and professional strife then prevalent. First in importance came the scientific theories, which, though in their infancy, were creating the wildest expectations. Chemistry, escaping from the realms of mystery, was becoming something positive and securing its position, though not without resistance. Its foreign and visionary antecedents awakened the suspicions of the purists of the school of Paris. The extravagancy of

its advocates, coupled with their avowed contempt for antiquity, stirred as with a trumpet note minds educated in profound respect for all that these new comers wished to reform in the official system or to cut away from it. In a word, it was the question, ever old and ever new, as to what place the accessory sciences should be allowed to hold in medicine, a question not even in our day definitively settled.

The attempt was, however, seriously began, and with some promise of success, for it is only just to note that the singular medley of philosophy and physic worthy of the Middle Ages, which Paracelsus and Van Helmont threw together, even when qualified by the prevailing Cartesianism, had found but little acceptance in France. From the first there was a marked distinction made between fantastic reveries and chemistry, properly so called. While the Cabala of Belgium and beyond the Rhine passed quickly to become the heritage of charlatans and mountebanks, for its trifling positive residuum a more brilliant future was reserved—though the advance was slow, it was none the less assured. The results obtained were material and palpable, and offered advantages which the alchemic theorists would scarcely be prepared to look for, namely, getting rid of the mystery in which chemistry was enveloped, and the application of it to practice as any other useful science might be. The process, however, was not free from difficulty and danger. The powers of mineral agents were now proved to be most potent by startling everyday evidence, but the train of reasoning on the principle

involved was simple enough. If the effects were sometimes poisonous, why should they not also sometimes cure? Experience could alone decide, and this was being actively pursued. Alas! with as much of mischief as of equivocal success.

During the period embraced by our study, the cause may be summed up in the antimonial controversy, which forms one of the most curious polemical episodes in the history of therapeutics. For many years the skill and erudition of the medical world was passionately engaged in vaunting or condemning the marvellous virtues of the mineral, which Bazile Valentin had long before given to the world as a universal panacea; so ardent was the agitation that the grand discoveries and speculative truths involved, received but very secondary attention. The Harveian discovery of the circulation and the more recently discovered *rôle* of the chyliferous vessels, however, quickly found their places. Recovering from the first shock they occasioned, our worthy doctors found here additional fuel to feed the controversial fires, too hot to last much longer: and which even their generation lived to see extinguished—a happy consummation this, in which comedy largely shares the merit.

The manner in which the stage attacks were now directed is not the least interesting of the popular elements aiding the event, as will be seen whilst we follow Molière through the various relations, artistic, social, and scientific, of his stage career. Still, it must be remembered that while the reforming movement was powerfully strengthened by its dramatic con-

tingent, it had itself made immense advances. The tendency was general and widespread. With the exception of the leading teachers, who took up arms to oppose the invasion, the chemists and the circulators, as they were called, rapidly got their views to be accepted. The leaders of the school so long wedded to immobility were not disposed to forget their glorious past, and they violently continued to exclude the enemy—faithful to the principle of Galenism, with Riolin and Guy Patin at their head, they refused all alliance with the innovators. For upwards of three-quarters of a century the strictest exclusion was maintained. It was not until their hand was forced by Parliament, and by the order of Louis XIV., a chair was created for the propagation of the new discoveries, that those staunch Conservatives surrendered, and threw their doors open to their young reforming rivals.

Riolin, the worthiest of Harvey's antagonists, did not live to witness this defeat. How Guy Patin managed to survive it, is difficult to imagine—fine type of medical polemic as he was, so bilious, so irascible. Such was the fact, however. Resolute defender of the faith in physic maintained by that school whose oracles were Hippocrates and Galen, how galling must it have been for him to see the good old cause decline and be driven thus from its sanctuary. But we must not imagine that this athlete was capable of yielding one iota; he would combat to the last, and to the last he performed some startling feats upon the enemy's territory. But

his followers had not the obstinacy of their leader, and the cause was lost; when Patin finally succumbed, our comique kept him company, for both died in the same year, and when it strictly might be said their differences were effectually decided and had become a part of history.

I.

BORN in 1622, Molière's childhood was passed amid home surroundings the opposite of intellectual. In this respect, however, the author of The Misanthrope was like very many others who have attained celebrity in literature and art. The influence of his practical and honest *bourgeois* parents, with their dread of the *belles lettres*, could neither be of a nature to awaken latent genius nor encourage it if manifest. It might be safely held that the younger Poquelin made his way in spite of them. But his childhood we shall leave to his biographers. When at college, on the students' benches, it may be presumed his life was more in accordance with his tastes and inclinations, for there it was that he had the good fortune to be thrown into the company of young and kindred spirits, who, like himself, were destined to make a name in the world.

To prepare young Poquelin for the part he had to play in that fantastic movement, which we have endeavoured to describe, something more was required than what the Clermont Fathers could impart, and this was not neglected. When in about his nineteenth year, though the exact date remains uncertain, we find Molière's name associated with those of Chapelle, de Bergerac, Bernier, Hesnault, and others, as receiving the instructions of Gassendi—that contemporary sage

who of all others might be called the father of our positive philosophy.

Ardent and full of promise were the minds Gassendi had to mould. As he was a lover of the poets and genial in his scientific scepticism, to pupils such as Chapelle, Cyrano de Bergerac, or Hesnault, the charm of his instruction shed a roseate hue upon philosophy itself. But like Bernier, the younger Poquelin saw further and was more earnest in his work. The translation of Lucretius, which he in part accomplished, was a reminiscence of the period, and shows the deep impression philosophic studies made upon his mind.

As the speculative tendency of Gassendi and his classic model Epicurus have scarcely lost their terrors even in these latter days, it will be well to note the affinities which linked them together throughout an interval of two thousand years. Gassendi, vindicating the neglected theories of a philosopher so universally condemned, took a hazardous step for one in holy orders and the provost of a sacred college. But the materialism which recognises chance for deity, and pleasure as the highest moral aim, was as foreign to his system as to that of his model so much misunderstood. His spiritualism, though never questioned by superior authority, was such as to permit revolts against the prevalent scholasticism, to break alliance with existing methods, and fearlessly to confront philosophy with facts drawn from observation and reality. To overthrow the system of Aristotle, which science and religion alike had consecrated, demonstra-

tion and deductive reasoning had far too little credit to hope for success; but Gassendi was not without a means of lessening the difficulty. Conciliatory and respectful towards high authority, he nevertheless, in the name of Epicurus, undertook the task. Besides the community of thought and sympathy of character which this model sage presented, the writings of Lucretius, his eloquent Latin exponent, must have much influenced Gassendi in his design; nor need this surprise us. The poem *De Rerum Natura* is as sublime as the universe which forms its theme, and leaves nothing to be desired, unless it be the conventional conception of a first cause. It is true that Epicurus was a heathen—so was Aristotle—but faithfully observant of the doctrinal limits of the two-fold truth as held by mother church, Gassendi read him through the creeds, and knowing that what was theologically false might still be philosophically true, he drew from this source his ideas with a courage startling to us in an ecclesiastic of the seventeenth century. As might be naturally supposed, in much that Gassendi advanced he was perfectly in harmony with what was taught, but he professed the physical theory of Epicurus, and therein lay his philosophic heresy in the eyes of his contemporaries. Though the time had not arrived for such views to be accepted, his teaching opened the way for those who were to follow, and it is to the honour of the man that he advanced so far as to anticipate the principles of modern science in its highest achievements, the atomic theory as applied to chemistry, structural evolution, organic and inor-

ganic in the play of molecular forces. This can scarcely be denied.

It was but natural that a method so unpretentious, and so acceptable to liberal minds should have made Gassendi a central spirit, around which were grouped a number of enlightened scholars and physicians; among the most familiar of these were Bernier, and Guy Patin, the celebrated representative of the doctors of the Faculty. Patin, we may add, was Gassendi's own medical attendant.

That Molière's association with this master mind had imbued him with a juster method of thought and observation than fall to the lot of most there can be but little doubt. The simple and experimental system of the great professor was precisely such as he was likely to appreciate and apply. But guided also by example, his favourite author was Lucretius, and we may easily conceive his young imagination charmed with the grand and ardent spirit which that singular writer breathes. That he should readily accept a doctrine, at times fantastic, but always presented under a form of poetic fascination, is quite natural; still the fact can scarcely be denied that as he advanced in years he rested content with the positive in all that concerns knowledge; in life and art a naturalist—a very realist, in fact—his free and independent mind would have been unfaithful to itself had he done otherwise. The transcendental, whether material or spiritual, seems to have been less a necessity of his nature than is the case with poets generally; indeed, we cannot fail to mark in him, as with so many of his age, a mind tried

by uncertainty and doubt which perhaps he felt too deeply. Be this as it may be, he saw in the words and ways of the exalted *savants*, philosophic or devout, an element of comedy as fertile as that which social life presented, and where assuredly his powers of observation needed no direction. What Molière imbibed directly from Gassendi was especially that sentiment which the practical phases of his later life matured, a contempt for everything proceeding from the school in the shape of useless classification and ready-made formulæ—a horror for the erudition that usurped the place of common sense—subtleties that confused and mystified under pretence of explaining, and above all a profound aversion for pedants and talkers—the Tartuffes of science who discoursed most loudly of what they knew the least.

When his studies were finished, the classics and philosophy were laid aside; the time had now arrived that should decide his future career, but as with genius generally, the course was difficult to choose. Neither commerce nor the bar, to which about this time he had been called, appear to have presented prospects suited to his tastes or inclination, actuated by a predilection for the drama, and perhaps some spirit of adventure, or it may be, a love for *la Béjart*, which is not improbable, he abandoned the *Palais de Justice* where he had never pleaded, for the comic stage, which he was never again to quit. At the age of twenty-two he joined the *Illustre Théâtre* at the *fossés* of the *Porte de Nesle*, and struck into the rugged path that leads to fame.

The circumstance was fortunate. The stage was in its infancy. Corneille in France, like Shakespeare in England, had given a powerful impulse to the drama, raising it from barbarism; but an artist and a greater poet was still required to give it form, and Molière marvellously possessed the double gift in rarest combination. It was only a few years earlier that a company of performers had been permanently established in the capital, a measure due to the Cardinal de Richelieu. That powerful minister, himself a cultivator of the muse, wrote verses with the aid of Collet and Boisrobert, though it must be admitted he was less successful with the muse than in politics, a province in which to this hour he is conceived to hold a masterdom. While producing nothing that was worthy of his name, he showed himself critically severe to others, if we are to believe, as has often been alleged, that the vanquisher of Rochelle was jealous of the author of the Cid himself. If we admit this, his influence will be none the less propitious, his passion for the theatre advanced the national comedy, encouraged a purer taste, and made private theatricals become a favourite pastime with the educated classes. It was this sphere in which the younger Poquelin's talents first displayed themselves.

II.

How curious would be the record of Molière's early professional career; how rich the store of scenes, vicissitudes and anecdote which its pages would afford. While leading in the south an itinerant and nomad life for years, we find him wandering from town to town catering for provincial audiences; sometimes full of hope, but always active in the interests of his troupe, and bravely doing battle with the penurious exigencies of the strolling player's life. A child of circumstance, genius and adventure, we can conceive his rapid mastery of the national farce and the pieces of Italian type that formed a stroller's *répertoire*. We can fancy his occasional fits of Bohemian glee, as success inspired him to throw off some ephemeral composition of his own; works, perhaps, at the first of no great intrinsic value. Left to mere conjecture this is likely enough, though amongst them there would occur a few of those unpolished gems which at a later period so thickly shone forth in his comedies. Assuredly, but oh! how long a struggle had to be endured before that culmination was attained. Tender of heart and fortune-flouted, with a company to support, who of our contemporaries would willingly exchange the situation for the name, or hope to nurse a genius in its trials? It is to be feared an empty treasury or emptier stalls would quickly end the struggle; still the poor comedian faced it rather than relinquish the pursuit.

If his raid against the doctors was fraught with blessing to humanity, of which there can scarcely be a question, this season of probation need not greatly be regretted. This season of his life was, if not profitable, busy. Returning to the capital well stored with stage-material beyond the requirements of an ordinary company, he had no lack of subjects; as M. de la Martinière informs us, "he had a mass of sketchy pieces and trifling farces innumerable, which he had produced in the provinces." Of this number were, Les Trois Docteurs Amoureux, Les Trois Docteurs Riveux, Le Médecin Volant, Le Fagoteux, Le Médecin par Force, Le Grand Benit de Fils, and others unconnected with our subject, which we need not mention. So fair a list, with medicine for their theme, is, to say the least, significant, and shows that from the first the subject had for him a certain attraction that should be borne in mind. However, in its treatment Molière has as yet no other motive than attachment to the traditional spirit of the provincial stage. He seems to have a love for the older types of the popular farce; before abandoning himself to an inspiration all his own, he worked upon subjects that had a lingering possession of the stage. This explains the origin of his earlier triumphs, those sketchy plots and characters he recast, when his genius grew mature, subduing buffoonery, and superadding as a new element those grand ideas at once philosophical and moral which underlie the whole of his creations.

But this was at a later stage of his career, when the general practitioners had become his associates. At

the period we treat of, it is the medical practitioners of the strolling stage who seem to share his confidence, and for some time to be his masters and only models —a kind of natural school, whose character and influence it may be well to examine.

It is a well-known feature of the poet's life—one, perhaps, exaggerated—that an instinctive liking early led him to a close connection with itinerant companies. It was even said he received instructions from the first performer, Scaramouche. This is not improbable. His was a theatre of the *Tabarin*, *Gautier-Guarguille* and *Turlupin* type, with its inexhaustible repertory of liveliest comicalities, not without a certain merit of their own, and where the popular *Jodelet* and *Jocrisse*, together with the *docteur ridicule*, were naturally favourite *rôles*. Then, was there not the famous Guillot Gorju ? That singular actor stood unrivalled on the stage which was at war with all the faculties, especially that of medicine, the licentiates of which it lashed severely. His was the stage of the *médecins ambulants*, proper, caterers for practice, who had in them more of professional jealousy than of Greek or Latin, and who found in their performances a means, like any other, of competing with the legitimate fraternity. Vendors of specifics, plasters, and *pomades*, they sought their patients in the crowd, which was at all times credulous and ready to applaud them in their farcical tirades.

In this humble sphere of art, with all its eccentricities, there was no doubt much which our comique would relish and appropriate, and the very little that

he owed to it he was seldom permitted to forget. Long after he was independent of all invention but his own, his enemies were ready to remind him of his earlier alliance and affinities, and his fame remains indelibly associated with two at least of its celebrities. One was the renowned Italian Hieronimo Ferrati, the inventor of the well-known nostrum, *Orviétan;* the other, the still more famous Barri, the most distinguished virtuoso in the world: "The sphinx of the profession, the paragon of medicine, the successor of Hippocrates, the observer of nature, the vanquisher of maladies, and the scourge of all the faculties." In fine, a veritable hero in the Israel of quakery, a prolific race, and seemingly as far as ever from extinction. In registering the names of these contemporary and artistic empirics, history has conferred a lasting favour, as we shall have occasion to point out in referring to them hereafter.

But this does not exhaust the sources of Molière's provincial medical prototypes. May it not be believed that he also drew some inspiration from a sphere certainly more legitimate, but quite as much a remnant of the past as the buffooneries of the *médecin ambulant?* That he did so at this epoch is scarcely to be doubled. The itinerary of his professional wanderings, alas! far from perfect, show him active with his company in the vicinity of Montpellier. So near the celebrated city, with its faculty of medicine, which also claimed like that of Paris the exclusive privilege of granting the licence to practise *hic et ubique terrarum,* it would be singular had he overlooked a spot so famous,

and supplying so much that came within the scope of his province. The pilgrimage to that grand old seat of learning was a duty due to science. Long the mostfrequented of the medical resorts of the West, how glorious was its past. Early in the middle ages, thanks to its communal institutions, it was the noted centre of an intellectual and studious life, and long before its university was founded, it prided itself in its schools, especially that of medicine, whose claims to high antiquity were lost in legend and tradition. If Paris linked her medical institutions with the rise of the Capetian monarchy, Montpellier's pretensions rose to Clovis, and had Charlemagne among her patrons. If Paris had seen emperors seated on its benches, and popes passing from its portals to fill the chair of St. Peter, Montpellier had had the honour of supplying almost all the first physicians to the kings of France, and of capping the list with François Rabelais. The philosophic jester, as all the world knows, took his degree of doctor at Montpellier, and his farcical *Rondibilis*, who was no other than his master, from the chancellor Rondilet. Though leaving no memento of his term of study, unless it was the rite of fisticuffing that greeted the fresh alumnus, this worthy's name was still held in veneration. Unfaithful to the lancet, it was when he wore the robe ecclesiastic we must seek for a reminiscence, should we wish to find it. The rhapsodies of this audacious humourist, since grown classic in the world of letters, found naturally in our comique an ardent lover, and oftener than once he draws from that source an argument the

more, if such were needed, in favour of his visit to the spot.

But if any doubt has hitherto existed with reference to this circumstance in M. Germain's mind, nothing is more certain for the future, for he furnishes even the occasion and the date. It was during the sojourn at Pézénas, with the Prince de Conti, that Molière happily turned his opportunity to good account in storing up material for the *Cérémonie* of the Malade Imaginaire. As will be seen, he had certainly no need to go so far to seek his models. But yet the provincial form had certain merits not to be neglected, as various scenic details prove. The musical accompaniments of the *réunion cortège*, and the reception ritual with its multiplicity of sounding gerunds were well-known features of that school, and are points Molière has thought it advisable to utilise. But whether the formalities of Paris or Montpellier are in view, the trifling variations own a common origin, and date from the thirteenth century with its love of symbolism, to which the renaissance had lent a classic pagan character in long harangues of academic cast. Of the two great schools the formalities of Montpellier no doubt were the older, and had the greater celebrity.

Our metaphysician, Locke, who while on his continental tour, allowed himself to be attracted by the old scholastic exhibition of the conferring of the doctorate, gives in his journal a note of the proceedings most curious to refer to. The entry which he humorously styles a recipe for making a doctor, runs somewhat as follows:—Grand procession of doctors

in red robes and black caps, ten violins playing the airs of Lulli. The president takes his seat; the violins cease, and he begins to speak; eulogising his colleagues he forthwith delivers a diatribe against innovations, and the circulation of the blood. The recipient in turn compliments the chancellor, the professor, the academy. Again the violins; and the president takes a cap, which an attendant had been holding upon the point of a staff throughout the procession, places it upon the head of the newly created doctor, puts a ring on his finger, and then passing a gold chain round his waist, prays him to be seated. Locke's impressions are both graphic and amusing, and one could almost wish the poet's equally authentic. If the common-sense philosopher was tickled by the fête, the poet who was a senior of his school would hardly feel less interested, or fail to profit by a *mise en scène*, he afterward so happily burlesqued. Be the visit, however, real or fictitious, it is no less a verity that his later mimicry tended powerfully to upset the old parade, together with the doctrine it adorned, and which the bachelor on such occasions swore most solemnly to observe *usque ad effusionem sanguinis*.

Notwithstanding their mummeries, ceremonial and scientific, it would be a professional injustice to class the fathers of a famous faculty with the popular *operators* of the seventeenth century, no matter how distinguished. But as Molière drew his wit and portraiture from whatever source lay open to him, this was the order destined to receive the buffets of his later and immortal critique.

At this time everywhere beyond the capital, the comedy was the vulgar nursling of the strolling stage, and as yet no marked distinction existed between the heroes of the fair and those of genuine comedy. But no sooner was a rising genius and a troupe of no mean talent active in its service, than its cruder forms gave place to more of art significance. Our comique felt his way, drew from the types and standard pieces already known, and with a skill, if immature, strong in goodly promise. The ancestral pedants and *médecins ridicules* transplanted to his stage were fit for better company. In the farce these *rôles* remained his favourites. He remembered them in after time, and again retouching them, their finer qualities still survive in Pancras, Sganarelle, and the learned doctors of the Faculty, who must for all time please the most fastidious.

In his more ambitious efforts the process is the same. Artistic sources, home and foreign, aid him in his march; that he borrows freely is admitted, but then there is a virtue in his modesty, for when he ceases to feel doubtful of himself his mastery becomes manifest. At Béziers, with his troupe in 1656, he risks the earliest product of his higher flight, in giving to the public Le Dépit Amoureux. The piece betrays the features of the Spanish and Italian schools, but in the chagrin, struggle, or impulse of some new formed love there is the flow of sentiment and feeling peculiarly his own. Even L'Étourdi shows a trace of the alloy; but if the motley characters which crowd the scene are southern in guise, the spirit and caprice

are native born. What animation and vivacity, what charm of style and drollery! For the author, Argan, Alceste and Tartuffe are no longer impossible creations.

A few years more and he attains his fullest powers, locks up his cruder types, rejects the stock *rôles* of the southern stage, and with a boldness and originality surprising to his contemporaries, paints from the models the fresher and more vital school Parisian life affords; modish eccentricity, language *précieuse*, hollow philosophy and science; in fine, everything in the shape of falsified education that the age presents, becomes in turn the subject of his comic muse.

III.

THE young Gassendian sectaries having been alluded to, it will be interesting to trace a little further their connection with our subject. We have seen the adventurous experiences which Molière's vocation had for many years entailed on him; but the biographic records of his *quondam* fellow-students show their earlier careers to have been equally remarkable. In the interval all had attained to note or notoriety, whilst their philosophic master still maintained an intellectual activity, and even to exercise, as already mentioned, a certain influence on scientific minds that were in close alliance with the Faculty. As too little attention has been given to this fact, it now deserves particular notice.

The mission of the young enthusiasts named was quite in keeping with their characters, which might be classed as that of the *enfant du siècle.* Cyrano de Bergerac, in exchanging arms and duelling for literature and philosophy, still continued militant. Highly gifted as a poet, dramatist, and prose-writer, and by turns physicist, he violently assailed the idols of convention. God's immortality and medicine he treated with contempt, and visiting celestial spheres, prepared the way for *Micromégas* and Gullivers, bent on similar expeditions.

Chapelle ran too far in pleasure's chase for us to follow him. This, however, is not necessary, as his long familiar intimacy with the Comedian makes him so well known to the student. Though entering early

on a life-long course of poetising, dissipation, and folly, Chapelle continued to ardently uphold his favourite philosophy. It would appear to have been seldom absent from his thoughts, for when deepest in his cups and remaining long at table, we find him summoning up his lackeys to listen to his expositions of the beauties of the Epicurean system. Nor were the deplorable results of ignorance in medical science overlooked, as, for instance, on the occasion when the *femme de chambre*, on entering his apartment, found him and his mistress a prey to grief and tears, and, curious to know the cause, learned that they were bewailing the fate of the poet Pindar, whom the doctors of his day had killed by administering a remedy *mal-à-propos*.

What an example of Bohemian intellectualism and recklessness Chapelle's life presents; but Hesnault was still more inconsistent in his apostolate. Also a poet, this worthy allowed his fine imagination to play sad havoc with what ought to be the model life. Passionate in his advocacy of materialism and irreligion, often refined and elevated in his writings, profligate and restless in his habits, he and misery seldom parted company. In his earlier days, as has already been referred to, Molière employed himself on the translation of Lucretius, long since stowed away in his dramatic baggage, no more to see the light of day except in traces here and there in the Marriage Forcé, Les Femmes Savantes, and the Misanthrope. Hesnault, yielding to the same seduction, had also tried the task, in which he showed a high appreciation

of the theme. The fragment published possesses merits of the highest order. Though fertile both in verse and prose, the work is perhaps that product of Hesnault's genius which does him greatest credit.

As a product of the Epicurean revival it must be owned that these poets, Molière included, did it little honour in a moral sense. While sympathising with their qualities of heart we could have wished them wiser heads; generously making all allowance for their age and genius, it is with diffidence that one refers to them. Cherishing enthusiasm for their favourite system, the moral element was often misdirected and utterly at variance with its spirit. The errors of the band in this respect supply a curious page of philosophic history—one that still remains unwritten—for it cannot be denied that Epicurean ethics faithfully interpreted are as pure as any other yet devised; the saintly mode of life Gassendi understood it to impose is proof of it, yet these gifted and ingenious writers were his pupils and direct familiars. It might be said that liberal teaching in its tendency was a food too potent for contemporary youth, and presented a too abrupt emancipation from the Jesuit fetters of the prevailing collegiate system. The view is not without some force; the regrettable reaction, however, has a simpler explanation, the intellectual orders and coteries of *hommes d'esprit* already professing and practising an *Epicuréism élégant*, formed, as it were, a social school the most inviting for young aspirants entering on the world of letters. From the fascination and the follies of the

frequenters of the Temple there was no escape. It was rather to the literary and artistic than the speculative cause that license and frivolity was due. We must consequently be upon our guard as to the tendencies with which the philosophic movement in question has been generally associated. The purity of Gassendi's character is above all criticism, and great would be the error of charging the doctrine which he taught with a tone and application certain of his followers pleased to give it. Still, it can scarcely be denied that there was something of the nature of a family tie existing between the morals of his youthful followers, and those that in full flower marked the first society in the following century.

This question, though inviting, we leave others to decide. Happily the charges of romance and folly, impossible to conceal or pardon, did not apply to all; if minds more serious were necessary to the cause, our student group could scarcely fail to furnish them. In this respect François Bernier was a fine example; playing a prominent part in the medical associations of the poet, he merits special notice.

Though gifted as a writer, and who may still be read with pleasure, Bernier escaped the literary reputation of his fellows. With a mind more solid, his ambition lay in quite a different direction; choosing medicine as a profession, and graduating with honours, he set out on foreign travel, visiting Syria and Central India, at that time little known. He was received with much distinction at the court of the Great Mogul, and became physician to the reigning

emperor Aurungzebe, in which capacity he served for several years, till rich in Oriental reminiscences, he finally returned to France to charm Parisians with the published narrative of his adventures.

If this incident in Bernier's career was an event for the *Salons* of society, it was, however, the scientific circles it more particularly concerned, especially that philosophic party from which he had emerged. Renewing his relations with Gassendi and kindred thinkers such as Jacques Rohaulte and Lamothe le Vayer, who was so intimate with our comic poet, he was hailed as an adherent of no ordinary kind. As a student Bernier had followed with deepest interest the memorable controversy of his master with Descartes, whose speculative novelties were now invading medicine. Descartes, the veritable founder of modern physiology, closed his *Discours de la Méthode*, in expressing the determination to devote his remaining years to securing for its system more of certitude. But from the absolutism of the demonstrations, physical as well as moral, which stamped his philosophizing, this was scarcely possible for him; in physiology, principles geometric and abstract were there, as they must always be, inapplicable. The attempt was a failure. Gassendi, much less assuming in his views, consistently opposed a limit to his glorious rival's speculative tendencies, smiled at his psychological demonstrations, made light of his innate ideas, automatic biologies, and other such like half truths; and seeing the world of reality in imminent danger of evaporating in mathematical extension, he upheld in

matters of physical observation the authority of the senses, which is, after all, the highway to all knowledge. His naturalism in philosophy, his experimentalism in science, together with a genial scepticism in what was metaphysical, qualified him admirably for the application of the lessons which nature, when simply studied, teaches.

That medicine was slow to show the influence of infant positivism may justly be admitted; whatever glory there might be for the healing art in always having had philosophy as an ally, Gassendism tended powerfully to make relations fruitful, and this was chiefly due to François Bernier. Learned and genial in his character, he was the type of a class not altogether unknown in the Faculty itself, men of mind who foresaw the inevitable changes in what constituted science, and who, though taking small part in the tilts of the controversial medical arena, laboured to accomplish them. Nor were such without their triumphs; the discovery of the circulation of the blood and functions of the chyliferous vessels, confirmatory of their views, was a passport for their heresy, and those innovating accomplices assisted jocosely at the interment of the liver, fearless of the consequences the rejection of its sacred functions might entail. Since Galen, that organ had received the chyle, given origin to the veins, and otherwise played a marvellous *rôle* in the economy. Our moderns changed all that, and forced the staunch Conservatives to burn the gods they formerly adored. This was only one of many incidents in the campaign of Bernier and his

friends; their designs went to the root of things; with their new conceptions they undermined the stupendous doctrine of the elements and temperaments, called in question the sympathies and faculties natural and occult; in fine, imperilled the entire fabric of dominant physiology. If the Gassendian physiologists, in common with the Cartesians, still treated the nature of the spirits—natural, animal, and vital—with respect, they modified it in their own particular way. In leaving to the four humours a more prominent place than might be expected, that mattered little; a vast advance was gained, and, however incoherent in detail, there was a revolution in the method clearly indicated.

From the cross-fire of the comedy in the provinces, and science in the capital, the medical delusions were at length to have some respite. Our modest philosophic school experienced a serious loss; in 1655 its leading spirit, Gassendi, died, leaving a name that links Democrates with Spencer. For a good Catholic this is saying much; yet he was neither martyred by the Church nor State—it was at the hands of medicine that he suffered, and, alas! we have no sadder illustration of its errors than that which the great man's mode of death presents. His quips and *bon-mots*, perpetrated at the expense of it and of its professors, were widely known; but for Gassendi's anecdotes and witticisms, as for Molière's comedy and ridicule, they finally had their revenge.

The malady from which the *bon-père* Gassendi died, we may mention, was an ordinary intermittent fever. Subjected to the routine treatment followed in such

cases, the sanguinary pedants of the day reduced him to the lowest state of physical prostration. Retiring for a time to his native village, hoping, no doubt, like Gil Blas under similar circumstances, to find himself beyond the reach of doctors, his state of health improved; but, obliged to return to Paris, the central stronghold of the members of the Faculty, he again experienced a relapse. Escape was now impossible; with a philosophic equanimity he resigned himself to fate. Guy Patin, besides holding with Gassendi in his speculative views, rejoiced in having him for a patient. He regards him as "an epitome *de vertu morale et de toutes les belles sciences*," and considers himself responsible towards the public for "the guarding of a life so precious"—no easy matter, for his counsel was not always followed. From time to time he has occasion to complain that his Epicurean patient will persist in observing Lent too closely, contrary to the prescriptions of the Faculty. "To tell the truth," writes Patin, "it is a marvel how the good sage supports his sufferings; his malady is so hard to bear." Conscientiously, it is not the honest doctor's fault; he leaves no medical resource untried, including bleedings, *coup sur coup*. Bernier regretfully notes this fact, and the evils to be apprehended in the treatment. This faithful friend declares "that with their small and frequently-repeated bleedings Parisian doctors kill our great Gassendi." Like his rival Descartes, who, when dying, begged his practitioners to spare French blood, Gassendi urges his objections, but in vain—the forms must be observed,

the men of science must have their way. With the thirteenth bleeding the provincial philosopher succumbed, at peace with all the world.

The potent arms of art were powerless in the case, and Patin felt it keenly. He gives expression to the tenderest feelings of regret for the loss of one so dear, a sentiment mingled with not a little of that irony seldom wanting in his letters. "I would rather," he writes, "that ten Romish Cardinals had died, the public loss would not have been so great." If the sad event stimulated Molière's medical prejudices, as we are led to believe, the comedian must have added as many doctors of the Faculty, the celebrated Dean included. But the fault lay with the school; Patin, though liberal in philosophy, was conservative in medicine; he was too old to learn; it remained for the Berniers in science and the Molières in art to grapple with its errors and abuses.

IV.

THE *Illustre Théâtre*, or Béjart-Poquelin Troupe, had early acquired a reputation far beyond the ordinary provincial play-goers. Not only Molière's singular artistic talent made itself remarked, his superior personal qualities secured him influential patrons and admirers. It would appear that in 1650 he had even been induced to try his fortune once more in the capital, where, under the auspices of Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, the comedian and his troupe appeared in a series of pieces. But as this was while the Fronde was at its height, the visit was both short and uneventful. Molière, packing up, again betook himself to the country, and the *roman comique*—a species of existence which the poet Scarron so deliciously details — was consequently resumed.

Allusion has already been made to our comedian's sojourn at Pézénas, near Montpellier, again under the patronage of the Prince de Conti, who was then governing the Province of Languedoc. This was in 1655. The first performance which the poet ventured, on this occasion, was the Dépit Amoureux, and such was the success of the performance, that Monsieur le Prince forthwith confided to him the sole direction of the revels with which—the Estates being in session—he was regaling the province. That the alliance of the prince and player was not only intimate but lasting, though surprising, was very natural. The prince, like his temporary servant, had belonged to

the Claremont College band, and in all probability had taken part in juvenile comedy with Cyrano de Bergerac and Poquelin himself. Like his fellows, also, he professed the Epicurean philosophy, was given to literature and art, and, to complete affinities, he proved himself to be quite as inconsistent as any of them in his ethical theory and practice.

This association was most fortunate, and proved to be the turning point in Molière's career. For thirteen years he had been active in the interest of his company, and with but moderate success. But from this time onwards his prospects brightened. With a troupe recruited and efficient and influentially protected by his new and generous patron, he determined on again competing for Parisian recognition. Still he was in no particular haste. Making what might be called a farewell tour of the provinces, he visited the leading cities, towns, and châteaux of the realm, drawing upon his now extensive repertory —tragedies, comedies, and farces—productions of the great Corneille, of his own, and of the nameless authors of the *théâtre ambulant* that were so dear to popular audiences.

If in perambulating the provinces burlesquing the doctors Molière escaped the contentions of the *Fronde*, he was not too late for those of the Faculty. When with his troupe he turned his face towards the capital, strife was general and furious. The spirit of desertion and revolt already alluded to had now attained its highest pitch. The innovating rival camps, with their alien cries of antimony and the circulation, were

competing for immediate recognition; and, if not on all points in accord, at least inseparably united in their opposition to official conservatism, leagued powerfully against them.

Faithful to tradition, the leaders of the corporation proved themselves worthy of their charge. If not the avowed enemies of progress—at all events they would not hear of it from any source but their own. By the new invading movement they consequently found themselves in open and continued antagonism with legislation and discovery. They long defied all Parliamentary interference, and held in check for thirty years the surgeons and apothecaries; they proscribed the circulation of the blood because it came from England, antimony because it came from Montpellier, quinine because it came from America. Their conclaves were the rallying centre of party warfare unequalled in the annals of medicine; and dearly has the Faculty paid for its iniquities. Its name has become a symbol of ignorance, pretension and routine, and to the present hour the public are disposed to hold its modern representatives chargeable with its errors, both in spirit and practice, which have long since passed away.

As for the science which this learned school professed, its ponderous Latin literature lies buried on the musty shelves of *l'École de Médecine*, a mine of precious wealth for medical archæologists to explore: and how marvellous is that well-nigh forgotten system. The stream from whence its inspiration came, perverted by the course of ages, was pure

enough at source. There was first the grand authority Hippocrates, but we must be upon our guard: it was not the physician of Cos whose works we know. No, it was a Hippocrates commentated, annotated, amplified, and harassed with scholastic settings that marred the simplicity of the original, and which a mastery of the peripatetic philosophy and its terminology could alone render intelligible. In the wake of Aristotle had come Galen, Averrhoes, Avicenna, all the tribe of Arabists—followed by others of a later date and reputation, such as Fernel, Baillou and Sennert, each adding his contributions to the mythic store. From out the accumulated mass of authorities and influences, classic, mediæval, and contemporary, had gradually arisen that system of dogmatic medicine so complex in its nature and curious to unravel. Its various elements would seem to defy assimilation, but, by an ingenious process of adaptation and reciprocal concession, the result was sufficiently consistent. Like all other speculative dispensations based on assumption, it was necessarily incomplete; subtleties and debatable points abounded; material for learned theses and solemn argumentation was endless; still the method suffered nothing, as the Faculty who made the law was its sole interpreter. Latinity and logic were paramount to fact or every-day experience; in medicine it was the reign of absolute authority.

On the embodied doctrine of the elements, with their qualities, primary or occult, assigned to matter, reposed their physiology. On the humours, tempera-

ments, spirits, the notions of the soul, with its faculties and functions was based a pathology equally fantastic, with its humoralistic superfluities and vitiations, conditions real or imaginary, that threaten to out-live their terminology. Their therapeutic system was the logical corollary. As faithful sectaries of Hippocrates and tradition, they were not without some scientific conviction that disease had a course peculiar to itself, which it was neither advisable to hasten nor anticipate; that one ought rather to remain expectant in its presence and skilfully profit by it. But the first half of the truth was easily lost sight of, while the second left much for them to do. As pathology resolved itself into a simple question of the quantity and quality of the humours, plethora and cacochymie or corruption were the principal conditions to be combated; the first by bleeding, the second by purgation. The dreaded cacochymie having taken place, the peccant humours were to be got rid of at all hazards and by both these means: the universal practice consequently verified the comic formula of the *Cérémonie* burlesque.

Clysterium donare
postea Seignare
ensuita purgare, &c.

The terrible imprecations with which M. Purgon in the Malade Imaginaire assails his indocile patient shows the awful penalties supposed to await those who dared to reject the consecrated therapeutic measures. But this evil was not without its antidote. Besides the lancet and the clyster, the

account of M. Fleurant, the apothecary in the same comedy, is a demonstration of the fertility of medical resources that were milder: and how instructive are the memorable passages!

It is well to be reminded of therapeutic fallacies found so difficult to reform, but which with all their faults formed part of a system logically consistent with itself; a system in which everywhere for real phenomena were substituted abstract ideas of a quality or force—theoretic notions formed the ground work, logic usurped the place of experience and demonstration, thus working out a curative fiction which the credulity and mental imperfections of humanity must eternally renew in the domain of medicine, where the suffering insist on being cured, and doctors pander to their hopes.

Such was the science of the school of which Riolin and Patin were the leading representatives, whilst Molière was its most amusing satirist at the juncture we now treat of.

To follow the controversial current with reference to the new discoveries scarcely comes within the scope of our study; we shall see as we proceed how passionate and rancorous was the spirit often hidden beneath the gravity and robes of the professors of the day when the innovations and the innovators are brought upon the scene. With reference to the two great questions, it is only just, however, to observe that the opposition of the Faculty to the Harveian circulation was chiefly shown by Riolin. From the first Harvey's discovery, in principle if not in detail, found

decided partisans; the doctrine was disputed but never altogether condemned. For Guy Patin, though subtle and narrow-minded, as we have seen, was not disposed to indulge in questions of pure science; on this point he willingly gave place to Riolin, he undertaking the epigrammatic part of the discussion. The secretaries of Harvey were called the circulators, which in Latin means charlatans; this is enough for Patin—the discoverers and their followers are impostors.

As for the antimonialists who were foremost in the fight, it was quite another thing. Patin has nothing bad enough to say of them. He has never prescribed a single dose or preparation of the drug which, according to his firm belief, "has killed more people than the thirty years' war." In his *Martyrologe de l'Antimoine* he carefully records every case in which he sees its fatal or injurious effects; every sudden death is another victim added to the list of martyrs. Ardent partisan opponent, it is easy to perceive how partial and one-sided his opinion is. The new remedy never comes in question but it stirs up pungent comments, followed with illustrative anecdotes detailed at the expense of those who use it, and no doubt at times apocryphal. But on this question he is not without his equals in the contest; never had the profession shown more literary activity; the folios, brochures, and pamphlets great and small, in vindication of the agent, multiplied like *mazarinades*, carrying conviction to the minds of many of the Faculty itself, where the cause was not without its martyrs.

In 1657 it had been difficult to decide on which side the victory would rest. The question had passed beyond the circle of the combatants; besides being one of medicine it now became one for the public. Within the year we find it brought before the Court by the poet Benserade in his Ballet of *L'Amour Malade*, the young king, Louis XIV., in person taking part in the dance.

In this allegoric divertissement replete with all the absurdity that comports the theme and epoch, the doctors Time and Tiff hold a consultation on the malady of Love in the presence of Reason in the capacity of sick nurse. The good old lady has sufficient sway to persuade them to lay aside their medical differences and substitute a lively ballet. But this is the last time Reason's voice was listened to upon the subject, for an occurrence the most unexpected shortly afterwards entirely changed the aspect of affairs. When we next hear of antimony in connection with the Court circle his Majesty is dancing to another tune — a circumstance which tended more than years of controversy to decide the question of its claims. In the following year, the young king falling ill, was submitted to the test of the emetic remedy, and happily with good results; to the rejoicing of the cause and nation, recovery was complete, supplying inspiration to the servile scribblers both in prose and verse, Scarron and Carneau among the number. This incident we note without detail, as we shall have occasion to refer to it more particularly hereafter. Now men-

tioned, however, it is not without some interest, being one of those medical events which enlivened the year of Molière's reappearance in the capital.

It was late in 1658 that our comique arrived in Paris, and while the doctors and their differences were still in full possession of public attention. He was consequently partaker of the hopes and fears which the malady and treatment of the Royal patient excited. The dramatic nature of the consultation of the Court physicians with the Cardinal Mazarin presiding, held on the occasion, and where the usual conflict of opinions was observed, was no doubt calculated to revive recollections fading in the past, reminding him that if the Tabarins and Turlupins, with their screaming comicalities and their grotesque doctors, were no more, the Faculty and its privileged practitioners still held their own, that seemingly their artistic mummeries were quite as much in public favour as ever.

For the philosophic critic specially interested in the history of the Faculty, its practitioners and its practice at this juncture, the learned and turbulent republic affords great attractions, and had it been the intention of the poet to continue the anti-medical campaign, success had never been more certain; nor would the undertaking have been arduous; as we have hitherto observed, his medical repertory was novel and abundant, the list beginning with the Docteur Amoureux, and ending with the Médecin Volant, must have relieved him of the necessity of any fresh invention. As we shall see, however, the

time was not yet ripe for seriously attempting the metropolitan crusade.

V.

WHEN Molière arrived in Paris he was thirty-six years of age. To a mind endowed like his the experience of life would not be lost. Besides a knowledge of humanity, which few attain, he evidently knew much of himself, and for one so sensitive and tried, even at this period his fate was hard to bear; nor did he hesitate to confess it. When directing at Pézénas the Prince de Conti had pressed him to become his secretary, we know how he replied: "I am a very moderate actor and might make a very bad secretary; of what use could be the service of a capricious misanthrope like me?"

There may have been other reasons for refusing the favour. Molière loved the theatre where he was his own master, and who knows—seeing we are dealing with a world apart—the fact of the death of the former secretary, the poet Sarrasin, from an injury of the head, inflicted by the prince in a fit of passion, would be little calculated to make the situation desirable. Be that as it may, it was well for the poet that he refused. The position might have marred his fame, and failed to lessen sorrows too deeply seated for remedy. The favour of the prince showed itself in a manner more acceptable,

when, through his influence with Monsieur, the king's brother, the Court preferment, so much coveted by the poet, was secured. It was under Monsieur's protection he made his first appearance in the capital.

Comparatively little is known of his earliest performances to the popular Parisian audiences. There can be no doubt, however, that to enable him to compete successfully with the Italian farce performers of the Petit Bourgoin, he drew largely on his minor pieces. And even as the position changed for the better, their style and theme were not altogether thrown aside, for not long after his arrival, and while playing at the Palais Royal with his company, then known as the *Troupe de Monsieur*, he appeared in one of his provincial comic trifles. The circumstance is often alluded to by his biographers as indicating other personal peculiarities scarcely less remarkable than his medical prejudice. These were his preference for tragedy and love of public speaking, weaknesses of which his company, so liable to murmurings and revolt, had often to complain.

His Majesty Louis XIV., being desirous of witnessing the performance of his brother's troupe, a representation was commanded for the Court. The poet chose the Nicoméde of Corneille for his début. It is said the effort was not more than moderately appreciated; if this was so, the failure was not without a gain, for yielding to a caprice of the moment, on the conclusion of the piece, Molière appeared before the curtain in becoming *bourgeois* costume, and in terms of liege respect the most happy and appropriate, solicited the

royal permission to supplement his effort with a selection from his provincial repertory. The request graciously accorded, Le Médecin Amoureux comicality was given and was well received; the favourable impression made by the speech no doubt aiding, paved the way for royal relations henceforth the most intimate.

Molière's company at first seemed to have met with small success. The Parisian audiences, less spontaneous and more critical than those of the provinces, were slow to render justice to its merits. In cultivating an appreciation for genuine comedy, Molière perhaps enabled them to judge him too severely; the same spectators, who applauded mediocrity in others, were unsparing in their censure of his faults, oftener fanciful than real.

When Monsieur, at his Majesty's request, ceded to him the protection of his troupe, it was fortunate for our comedian; Louis XIV., with a natural taste and art-appreciation which neither vice nor flattery could corrupt, was conscious of his claims; and when nothing short of such an influence as he possessed could possibly have saved the rising poet from the malice of his enemies, he faithfully protected him. It had been more to the honour of his contemporaries had they judged him rightly of themselves, but the time at last arrived, and all will now admit that the conduct of the monarch redeems a thousand faults with which posterity might otherwise have justly charged his memory.

Within the following few years his finest regular

comedies were produced, commencing with the Précieuses, Fâcheux and L'École des Femmes—still favourites of the classic stage. Notwithstanding the cry raised against the latter piece by the stricter members of society, who strangely misinterpreted its sentiments, it met with much success. Gaining fresh confidence, he next supplied the Critique de L'École des Femmes, and evidently with a view of replying to those charges brought against him. This comedy he wisely dedicated to the Queen Mother, who of the Court and the noblesse represented the religious interests of the realm. Apparently this act of liege-respect was well received, as royal favours followed, which made him less dependent upon popular caprice.

On his appointment as *Excellent Poéte comique* to the king, with an annual pension of seven thousand *livres*, his inventive genius acquired renewed activity, and at Paris or Versailles were given in quick succession those *chefs d'œuvres* of dramatic art, triumphs which, alas! to the moment of his death, were seasoned with the venom of professional jealousy, or the aspersions of religious prejudice. In 1764 we find him catering for the pleasures of his generous patron, when the favourite Sganarelle is invested with all the amusing incidents of the Marriage Forcé. The fêtes of May bring forth the Princesse d'Élide and Tartuffe.

With the latter comedy the Court was much delighted, and far from dreaming of the scandal it gave rise to. The former charges of impiety were renewed in stronger terms, and carried to the extent

of humbling the author and embarrassing the king. The state of religious feeling, which at the time prevailed, was little favourable for the reception of a drama that so closely touched the priestly order. The offence it excited among a certain class with greater claims to sanctity may be easily conceived if we remember the existence of Port-Royal, the centre of that rigidly severe and persecuted party, who were too naturally disposed to censure and condemn the pleasurable excesses of the Court. The king, by whom this faction was unfavourably regarded, was by no means indisposed to see this spirit met with ridicule, but this was not the feeling shared by the magistracy and the churchmen. The orators of orthodoxy in their hatred of Port-Royal were as violent in their tirades against the comedy. Roulés demanded for its author, "capital punishment, exemplary and public." Bourdaloue denounced him from the pulpit, while Bossuet, so eloquent and grave, could not speak of the writer of Tartuffe without invective. The ecclesiastical storm was far too strong to be withstood. To allay the clamour and show deference to a feeling, though mistaken, yet worthy of respect, the piece was for a time prohibited. But the difficulties of the Court and stage were not so easily adjusted. Molière, indignant at the Catholic puritanism which had denounced him as an atheist and a libertine, resented in a manner least expected, by immediately producing Don Juan or the Festin de Pierre, where he introduces a character such as they represented him to be, and "sent to the devil

somewhat ere his time." All this in a manner calculated to enlist public feeling in his favour, for he again appears under the favourite guise of Sganarelle, who maintains the cause of deity and morals by a thousand drolleries. In the eyes of those he had offended this seemed adding to his former errors, and by State authority the piece was summarily suppressed.

If Tartuffe may be said to exhibit less of the author's personality than some others of his compositions, there is none so finished or daring in conception. Who but Molière could forge a weapon so fitted to confound the enemies which bigotry can rouse at will? He points a moral with the persecution which he suffers, and gives a lesson of defiance to a power still far too dominant. We complain of criticism, and perhaps with reason, but what are the sputterings of literary rivalry compared with ecclesiastical denunciations?

In Molière's case the civil censorship was as inconsistent as the clerical judgment was unjust. At the very moment this incomparable comedy was suppressed, farces the most prurient and corrupt were tolerated—licence for buffoonery and ribaldry—interdiction of sublimity of thought and art! Often must the melancholy man have sighed for a little of the liberty allowed the Pasquinades of the Italian travesty performers. But he had his revenge in declaring through Don Juan, that "hypocrisy is a privileged vice which shuts the mouth of society and enjoys a sovereign impunity." Posterity con-

firms the sentiment. His manner of unmasking dominant abuses, with those axiomatic truths which he lets fly upon the scene in jest or in derision, has become a common heritage. Next to the wondrous genius of the poet, how much are we indebted to the spirit of Old Gaul that breathes in him; that precious satiric humour of the audacious story-tellers, the grandsires and grandchildren of Rabelais, sincere friends of humanity who, by a sound *hygiène*, moral as well as physical, were ever ready to beard convention and priestly arrogance, braving the stake to bring the truth to light, and whether grave or gay, moved by the sacred aim of exposing error and reproving injustice. Had it been possible to perpetuate such a race history would have had another tale to tell, and one, perhaps, unclouded by the mists in which the nation has floundered since the morrow of *Brumaire*, when France, abdicating her liberty and forgetting her traditions, renounced the scientific spirit of the eighteenth century, the richest spoil her enemies received; and, to their honour be it said, that is the force which constitutes to-day their main superiority and power.

These remarks, though scarcely coming within the range of our subject, may not be profitless to the reader. They throw some light upon a period of the poet's life so full of interest, and at the same time show how far the occupations of the earlier stage of his Parisian career had removed him from the inspirations and associations of his provincial sphere, now of the past, and with which it might

appear he had for ever severed his connection. Not entirely, it is true, for, as already noticed, his popularity in the capital had been heralded by the farce of the provincial description — Le Médecin Amoureux, and we find, at intervals, either at the Petit-Bourbon or at the Palais-Royal, Le Docteur Pedant, Les Trois Docteurs Rivaux, Le Fagoteur, the original of the Medecin Malgré Lui, as we say on the bills. We also hear of a piece called Le Médecin Fouetté ou le Barbier Cocu, of which nothing certain is known. But if the comique's interest in medicine and the doctors had diminished for reasons personal and private, the subject could not be altogether overlooked; it shows out in spite of himself, even where the theme has no connection with either, as for example in the Festin de Pierre, though the allusions are neither pointed nor important. The favourite theme latent or in abeyance, like a morbid pre-disposition in a given patient, only required an exciting cause sufficiently strong to bring it into play.

In a crisis of heartburnings and difficulties such as that referred to, the poet's moods of disappointment and chagrin must have carried his reflections into fields pleasant in the past and more promising for the future, and we may readily conceive that at times his thoughts would naturally, and with a certain sentiment of regret, revert to the humbler success of his strolling life. Constantly in quest of fresh material to engage his troupe, what subject would more readily suggest itself than that by which he gained his earliest laurels —the MÉDECIN RIDICULE? Now master of his own

particular art and deeply read in that one sanctioned by the Faculty, he again takes up the theme, and ruffles afresh the doctoral robes in L'Amour Médecin.

VI.

As Court comedian and "excellent comic poet to the king," Molière was a personage doubly favoured. As a servant of his majesty his admirable talents were nationally acknowledged, and living in the closest intimacy with the *beaux esprits* and the *élite* of art and literature, the fairest future prospects were everywhere before him. But if his ambition in its highest flight was more than realised, it may still be questioned whether his royal satellite position was not too dearly bought. In the discharge of his various duties there was much to rob it of its tinsel. Enjoying the respect and confidence of the *Roi soleil,* while catering for his amusement or flattering his vanity, was a distinction few could hope to attain, and making the royal bed by turns might convey much honour. It must, however, be confessed that the post was not without its disadvantages; obliged to mingle with a crowd of courtiers, little sympathetic and too often disposed to make the poet feel the inferiority of his distinction, he must at times have felt the irksomeness of inconveniences hard to bear and yet impossible to be avoided. We know the humiliations his mode of life entailed on more than one occasion, but, like his provincial

hardships, the new experience had its uses. Such, however, was the sphere in which it pleased fortune to place him, and it now remains for us to furnish some idea of the nature of the field from which he reaped so rich a harvest.

For some time, we remark at this stage, medicine and the doctors ceased apparently to occupy him. But if inspirations perhaps much more important found a place, we still may feel assured that he was none the less observant of the social comedy, which in all its trite reality was always going on around him. Continually moving in the society of the Court and the *noblesse*, he would naturally find much to note of an element so lively in that Court romance on which the literature and private *mémoires* of the times shed a light for ever fresh and fascinating. For these reasons it will be interesting to keep the poet company, and endeavour to supply some notion of the fashionable phases which hereditary medical delusions exhibited in a social sphere so elevated, and supposed to be untainted with the ignorance and credulity of the *bourgeoisie* and the lower orders.

In the continued routine of frivolities and revels at the Louvre or Versailles, the comique's services were now as indispensable as Mazarin's at the cabinet council, or Turenne's in the field. The brilliant assemblage of rank and beauty, where the favourites competed and intrigued for place and precedence to witness and admire royalty, and its puppets capering in ballets set to Lulli's music, may seem to savour a little of what might be considered morbid; still, those who, like the

poet, were quietly on the alert, had not far to look for it; the age and atmosphere alike were vitiated. There is another side of the picture—if less familiar equally interesting—where favourite confidants, *intriguants* and valets were the only spectators—a *coulisse* to which the poet had the *entré*, and was witness of a state of things as private and exclusive as that of the open Court was public and paraded. That phase of royal existence, in fine, whose sayings and doings were the theme of gossip, scandal, and cabal, and popularly supplied material for the libellers and rhymesters of the day; a world apart, where much might be gleaned of the relations of those within the charmed circle, and with which, thanks to the marvellous revelations of the Court physicians, whose testimony more especially concerns us, we are enabled to enrich our study.

Before carrying our medical and morbid inspection into the royal cabinet and *boudoirs*, let us introduce the reader to one or two of those celebrities well known before the curtain, and, like the poet, conversant with all that was going on behind it—*grandes dames* and great admirers of the comedy; it will be curious to see to what extent they profit by the lessons it conveys and the delusions it exposes. For our purpose the charming romance of the celebrated Mademoiselle d'Orléans—the Grande Mademoiselle—supplies perhaps the aptest illustrations. The work was published in 1657, precisely the year before Molière's return to Paris, and would no doubt receive his close attention. This fashionable novel is curious

to refer to; it is entitled, The History of the Princess of Paphlagonia, and gives an admirable idea of the important part which medicine played in the feminine studies and pastimes of the period, and is all the more interesting from the fact of its dealing with that famous coterie of which the *spirituelle* Marquise de Sablé was the reigning queen. Mademoiselle, the gifted authoress, who is of the set, vividly and pleasingly portrays the persons and peculiarities of her friends, and more particularly their medical foibles. Here Madame de Sablé and Madame de Maure are introduced under the assumed names of the "Princess Parthénie" and "Queen Misnie." A kindred passion for science leads these ladies to endless disquisitions on the vague and hazy claims of medicine. They find a fascination in its mystical extravagances, make an illuminism of the art so flattering to their natures; in their hands the captivating theme becomes a motive of persistent correspondence, where the speculative means of preserving youth and beauty receive the first attention, though rendering themselves immortal, a power which mingles in their hopes, is of course not overlooked. Their relations the most exacting are no interruption to their favourite pre-occupation; the dread of breathing an atmosphere too hot or too cold, too dry or too moist, constantly besets them and gives rise to a continual expression of fancied sensibilities and apprehensions of everything supposed to affect their humours and their spirits, which affords them a scientific recreation, a delightful pretext or apology for an hourly interchange of letters from each other's

rooms. How intellectual an occupation in society so frivolous, and how much is it to be regretted we are not favoured with a collection of the missives of the enthusiastic ladies. If well authenticated, they would form a critique upon physic from a female point of view valuable beyond all price. From what may be gathered in the romance, their learning and opinions are sufficiently consistent with the prevailing medical orthodox conceptions, though doubtless there were precepts and prescriptions in abundance very foreign to the Faculty. Nor would this surprise us; vendors of *Orviétan* and Elixirs of Life found purchasers at St. Germain's and Versailles as well as on the Pont Neuf in Paris.

It is singular how minds the most intelligent shared in follies the most childish in the search of the infallible. With physic as with faith, the thing is a necessity, and the difficulties of the doctors at this time were the golden opportunity for charlatans and visionaries of every possible description, as well within the pale of the profession as without it. The women and the wealthy of the first society were as usual the most active agents in spreading the medical mania, a foible which, though relating to disease and death, presents an aspect far from melancholy. As any manifestation more than usually remarkable of the medical infatuation *à la mode* transpires, Madame de Sévigné may well exclaim, "Oh, how suitable a subject for Molière!" for the gifted Marquise is as busy consigning to her tablets what is passing in this way as we can possibly imagine our comedian to have

been. In those charming letters of hers the facts are all before us, and at the same time show that she herself is not a whit superior to her sisterhood in this respect.

The truly gifted lady is much given to medicine. Although she has little faith in doctors, few have oftener need of them, and fewer still are less guided by their counsel. How pleasing it is to find her prating of her health, the spleen, the bile, and state of the spirits and humours. Without any serious scientific pretension, she is none the less curious to know something of the medical *rationale*, and why she should be treated in one way rather than another. She carefully collects her prescriptions, and unknown to the prescribers makes use of them in the treatment of her friends. Nothing pleases her so much as getting three or four of the fraternity together to puzzle them with questions, and put them when she can in discord. Should she succeed she triumphs and laughs at their embarrassment, an excellent motive to escape following their advice, which if by chance she should adopt and find no benefit it is with no small delight that she reminds them of the fact, and notes, "how she detests the doctors and their art absurdities." But she returns to them again, and even while on her journeys cannot pass through a town without consulting one or other of the local luminaries; if uneducated, so much the better, for there is this peculiarity about the Marquise's medical proclivities, that it is generally for the princes of the profession, the men of real scientific reputation, she

shows herself severe. For their errors, real or imaginary, there is no excuse, but let her meet some vendor of specifics who trades upon the privileges of the Faculty, her indulgence and credulity is marvellous. As, for example, when she speaks of the *Capucins du Louvre*, who profess to cure the ailments of their penitents as well as save their souls. Here her admiration is most ardent; they are for her *Les Bon-Pères Esculapes*. She has equal faith in the infallible cures of Madame Charrost, the domestic remedies of Fouquet; and even the clairvoyant revelations of the Chevalier Talbot, in matters of health and disease, have her full acceptance. True, however, to the instincts of her sex, it is not exactly medicine she requires of her physician; in this respect she shows herself more of the woman than we might expect. Listen to her on the subject of her Signor Amonio, that young and elegant Hippocrates who had established himself at Chelles, and was soon obliged to leave to avert a revolution in the Abbey. It is with all her usual grace and frankness she expatiates upon the personal qualities of her young attendant, and to a degree that one feels fortunate in being quite assured of her unquestionable virtue. As, for example, when she paints him to her friend as "only twenty-eight, with a face the most beautiful and charming I have ever seen. He has the eyes of Madame Mazarin, teeth perfect, in fine, every feature we can possibly imagine in Rinaldo. His hair, black and abundant, sets off a head the finest in the world. Conceive him dressed to perfection, looking like a

prince, and you have the portrait of the *bon garçon*, my doctor."

All this explains itself; what the charming Marquise required was a professional attendant, amiable and good-looking, such as may be found at almost every Spa, and whose medical qualification is limited to doing the agreeable and deluging the patient with the waters—one who can make the retreat agreeable for those escaping from the pleasurable excesses of the Court. Those who have been to Pau or Vichy of to-day know in what the life and *régime* of this species of retreat consists. We may see the character has undergone but little change, as the fascinating correspondent entertains us with the occupations and pastimes there observed. There is the early fountain *rendezvous*, the wry faces in the drinking of the waters redolent of the abominable mineral qualities, and, confidentially, their mode of operation, church attendance, drives and rounds of visiting; nothing is omitted.

To the thermal system the *grande dame* conscientiously conforms, notwithstanding its inconveniences, even to the douche, where all earthly vanities and social inequalities for the moment cease. However, in particular cases, such as hers, the tedious operation may be made supportable; and she tells us, "Behind the screen someone is placed to keep up your courage while the process lasts. In my case it is a doctor from Gannat, who has accompanied Madame de Noailles to the various spas; she likes him much; he is a *fort bon garçon* and not at all a charlatan or particularly

attached to any view or system. She has sent him out of pure friendship. He pleases me much, and I mean to retain him if it costs me my cap." Then, as for the sweating process, one must necessarily submit to it like ordinary mortals. But "here again the doctor shows his goodness; instead of leaving me to *ennui* for the inevitable two hours of the bath, he reads to me, and that amuses me. He is not a charlatan, and knows how things should be done by those who practise medicine."

The satisfaction of the *belle Marquise* is in every way most natural. The physicians of the Spa had as little of the authoritative pendantry as they had of the costume of their Parisian *confrères;* no Latin, robes, *perruques,* or *rabats,* they affected the fashions of the *beau monde,* sacrificed to the graces, and often could compose a madrigal as well as give advice. With the one class as with the other, it would certainly be flattering to find favour in the eyes of charming women —the sex to whom the success in practice was generally due—but in the two positions this system could not be pursued with equal safety; with the Court practitioner more especially, this quality was not without its inconveniences and even dangers. A fashionable watering-place practitioner turning the heads of the inmates of an aristocratic Abbey might not be a very serious matter for the State; but at the Louvre or Versailles, the central hotbeds of intrigue and cabal, of which it was almost impossible to steer clear, it was quite another thing, and the doctor who allowed himself to pass beyond the circle of his art-accomplishment, or

flirt with matters that did not concern him, might sometimes find himself in difficulties little enviable and much to be regretted.

Vautier was an instance of what might happen in this way. The generation not yet closed might well remember the experiences of this medical celebrity, who had but recently disappeared from the scene, having died so late as 1652. As he was the immediate predecessor of the series of the noted Court physicians who were the contemporaries of our comedian, and will hereafter be referred to, it will be well that the reader should know some few particulars respecting him. Attached to the household of Marie de Medici, the mother of Louis XIII., and regent during his minority, he became her chief physician and political adviser. As a zealous partizan of the intriguing dowager, jealously opposed to the party who assumed the direction of her son, Vautier became deeply implicated in her efforts to recover the control, which for a time promised to succeed. Richelieu, however, was not the man to be outwitted. Regaining the ascendency, he determined that his policy should not be disturbed by medical intriguers, no matter how favoured or distinguished. The separation of the *Regente* and the doctor was a political necessity. The young and vacillating prince yielding to the counsels of the ministers, Vautier was forthwith sent to the Bastille, to reflect at leisure on the unexpected collapse of the cause and party. In any case, interfering between women and confidants is a delicate affair; in this instance the consequences were alarming, and led to

the exile of the Queen and the downfall of her powerful medical partizan. The triumph of the Cardinal was the death-blow to the interests of the *Regente.* Her cherished schemes dissolved, and being inconsolable at the separation from her favourite physician, she finally fell ill. Declaring that the benefit of his advice was an absolute necessity, she appealed to the King for his release, but, guided by the counsel of the Cardinal, the prince was deaf to her entreaties. Still, as the fact could not be overlooked that the applicant was the royal mother, the patient and the doctor were allowed to communicate by letter. Vautier, however, if he had lost his liberty, showed he had not forfeited his dignity, and faithful to professional etiquette, positively refused to prescribe unless he saw the patient; but this favour was denied him, and his royal mistress found herself compelled to submit her case to the care of those whom her emenies felt disposed to recommend.

It was not until twelve years later, when Richelieu was dead, that Vautier was set at liberty, and when completely cured of his ambitious errors. A new *régime* offering brighter prospects, he again appeared at Court, where he was once more well received, serving faithfully the Cardinal Mazarin for many years, and finally becoming first physician to Louis Quatorze during his minority. He was the last of the medical political adventurers. The monarchical supremacy which Richelieu succeeded in establishing, and which Mazarin and his royal pupil confirmed, for ever shut the doors to projects of ambition, in this direction, on the part of members of the Faculty.

VII.

WHILE the *Belle Marquise* was busy with her correspondence, and our poet with his comedies, the reign of the *Grand Monarch* was in its fullest splendour. With its history the reader is no doubt familiar. The scenes and personages which most excite our interest have been the theme of poets and romancers. In the light of gallantry and gaiety, we see the brilliant Court with its *spectacles* and *fêtes*, the reigning beauties, the tinselled *roués*, and the charming *coteries* of wit and sentiment. In fainter colours are the fallen favourities, the lovely Magdalens, their cloisters and confessors, and peering here and there the austere votaries of Port-Royal, their enemies the Jesuits, Bossuet, and the eloquent preachers of the day.

In all this pageantry and masquerade our doctors have little place; the part they play is unobtrusive or behind the scenes. As necessary attendants in the service of the King and *grands seigneurs* relations might be intimate enough, but only in private. In society they retained in some degree the position of officials or domestics. For the Duc de Saint-Simon or Marquis d'Angeau, the physicians of the Court, no matter how distinguished, could only be regarded as persons skilful in their art; worthy of being admitted on an equal footing with the men of letters and the favourite *Abbés*, nothing more. With the *grandes dames*, for whom medicine had a special charm, eti-

quette reserve was not so close. To the circles of the advanced and literary spirits, the fashionable physician was welcomed as a friend and confidant, nor were instances wanting where courtier Boswells hint that they perhaps learned more of the secret sentiments of their amiable patients than even their confessors. The relations of the Marquise de Sablé with the doctors Valant and Cureau de la Chambre furnish an instance of the form of gallantry such scientific intimacies could occasionally assume. The time, however, had not yet arrived when preferring science to the fine arts was in fashion, when the *belles dames* talked physiology and metaphysics. As yet the favourite *philosophe* had not usurped the *fauteuil* of the wit and poet of the grandmammas; all this remained for Vicq d'Azyr, the encyclopædists, and the coming century.

The medical service in connection with the Court and the noblesse was necessarily limited. The physicians of the Royal household being chosen irrespective of the claims of the Faculties, Parisian or Provincial, the exercise of princely prerogative gave rise to party feeling, and explains a characteristic feature of the profession at the time which, with reference to the comedy, it is well to be reminded.

The career of medicine offered only two alternatives—that of cultivating general practice, associating with equals, letting the world take its course, and quietly laughing at those who lead it; or that of engaging in the service of His Majesty or some noble at the sacrifice of liberty and independence—a post

that few could possibly obtain. Between the two positions there was permanent and material opposition; about this time the rivalries had attained their maximum, causing much dissension in the medical republic. The courtier *confrères* were held in small esteem, and, judging from the sentiments Guy Patin takes so much pleasure in expressing, and which no doubt were those of his colleagues, they were generally looked upon as forming a class apart. The question M. Diafoirus estimates at its proper value, and finds no apter illustration than in the opinion he gravely confides to Argan, the malade imaginaire, on a memorable occasion. As a general rule the ordinary practitioners kept aloof from the society of the great, and were strangers to intrigue and affairs of State. As a body they were sufficiently powerful to dispense with all protection, and, confining themselves to their own sphere, regarded courtiers and statesmen with distrust, if not contempt. Prudence taught them it was dangerous to live with them on any terms.

Our doctors, however, were not without their frailties, and quietly such appointments were coveted, especially that of first physician to the king, one of so much honour and distinction in the Royal household. It conferred the title of nobility, the rank and privilege of a grand chamberlain of state. In the ambitions of the rival Faculties, this was the greatest prize that the profession had to offer, but this earthly award, like many others, too often fell to the lot of popularity and presumption rather than to genuine merit. During Molière's career Valot and Guénaut

were the chief medical authorities at Court, with d'Aquin and Esprit in ordinary. As all owed their elevation to incidents which generally lead to success in humbler spheres of practice, it will be curious to see how they comported themselves on attaining the distinction.

In 1647 the Prince Royal, who was eleven years of age, happening to fall ill of an attack of small-pox of a type, according to the courtier phraseology of the times, "worthy of a king," one of the rising physicians much in request by those connected with the Court was summoned with others to advise in the emergency. This was Valot, who boldly recommended bleeding; the measure, though contested, had the approval of the first physician—at this time Vautier of Bastille notoriety. The dissentients, returning from the sick-room, protested in the presence of the Queen, "that that measure was dangerous and contrary to the rules of practice." The Royal Lady, finding herself in a plight somewhat similar to Sganarell's in the case of his daughter, in the L'Amour Médecin, trembled for the safety of her son. The bleeding, however, was enforced, and the King recovered. Grateful for the signal service rendered in a case so desperate, and concluding it would be well to have a physician of such ability *en permanence*, Valot's place at Court was soon decided on, and we shall see at what price.

Though lacking the grand presence of Guénaut, whom no one of distinction could reasonably be ill without seeing once at least, or without laying claim to d'Aquin's subtilty and tact, Valot could give him points

in the art of curing courtier patients by *la belle imagination*, a quality which saw him through a host of difficulties. But there were other weaknesses to satisfy in gaining the appointment of first physician; like all other charges near the King it was venal, and cost him 30,000 écus, which went into the pockets of the Cardinal, Mazarin. He could well afford it, however, and when once installed felt himself secure of all competitors. In this his talents aided, but his chief position must have made the task less difficult. His services were to the King, whose caprices he had alone to deal with, whilst his colleagues were dependent on the whims and fancies of the favourite, or mistress for the moment. Guénaut came and went with her Majesty, d'Aquin with Madame de Montespan, as Fagon with Madame de Maintenon. Valot, as we have seen, owed his own preferment to a woman, and to escape the inconveniences of such influences was scarcely possible. He plumed himself on his *prognosis*. Now to pronounce a case incurable is always awkward, but forced to have to foretell a decease is still more serious, especially when the patient is of royal blood. As all the world knows, Anne d'Autriche, the Queen Mother, died from cancer of the breast; Valot had her in his charge, and the good Madame de Motteville, who records his efforts and perplexities under the painful circumstances, uncharitably charges him with killing her. In speaking of a doctor this was of little consequence. She makes him share that honour with his fellows. She admits that "he was skilled in chemistry, being of

Montpellier, and has the specifics for the malady, but too disposed to yield to the opinions of the doctors of the faculty of Paris, who bleed for everything, know no other remedy, and object to all that he proposes." It is the weakness of the world to refuse to understand why the great should not have maladies and medicines like other people, and will persist in dying though doctors do their best to save them.

But this was not the only queen Valot received the credit of sending to the grave. He was also accused of causing the death of *Henriette d'Angleterre*, the widowed Queen of our Charles the First, by ordering her an overdose of opium, which gave rise to the following lines:—

"*Le croyez vous race future*
Que la fille de grand Henri
Eut en mourant même adventure
Que feu son père et son mari.
Tous les trois mort par assassin,
Ravaillac, Cromwell, Médecin;
Henri d'un coup de bayonnette,
Charles fini sur son billot,
Et maintenant meurt Henriette
Par l'ignorance de Valot."

But Valot maintained his reputation to the last, and, what was more unusual, had the honour of dying at his post. Though latterly unable to attend to active duty, when the war with Holland was declared he insisted on following the King to Flanders, where he died; the fatigues of the campaign of 1674 proved fatal to him.

This cleared the way for d'Aquin, also of Mont-

pellier. D'Aquin was a man of mind rather than of science, and possessed in the highest degree the qualities of a courtier. But by the time that he succeeded the office was no sinecure. To manage a king becoming gouty and dyspeptic, who would persist in leading in the pleasure of the Court as well as the affairs of State, must have been a task most arduous for the first physician; and, in fact, notwithstanding his ability, he had finally to succumb. It was not, however, until he had enriched himself by making the most of opportunities. He had the reputation of being a great solicitor of royal favours, and not without success. M. Raynaud, who has much to say about our doctors, gives an anecdote in illustration, which is worth repeating. One morning at *levée* some one informed the King that an officer whom he knew and respected had died during the night. Louis XIV. expressed his regret to lose one who, besides having long and faithfully served him, possessed a quality very rare among courtiers—he never asked a favour. In saying so the King fixed his eyes on d'Aquin, who knew well what his Majesty meant. But, without being in the slightest degree disconcerted, he replied: —"*Oserait-on, Sire, demander à vôtre Majesté ce qu'elle lui a donné?*" The King was unable to reply, for he had never conferred a favour on a courtier so discreet.

If d'Aquin made himself remembered it was neither by his skill nor character; it was as a clinical recorder. In this respect his name, with that of Valot and his successor Fagon, forms a

historic trio which will live as long as their royal master interests humanity—a fact due to the marvellous record of their patient which they have left to edify posterity, wherein is consigned from day to day for more than sixty years, and with all the medical minuteness of detail the learning and science of the time permitted, notes on the health and habits, maladies and treatment of their charge. Besides being a charmingly antiquated contribution to the healing art, the royal case-book is an historic revelation of no ordinary kind, and of which, together with its royal subject, a few particulars may be interesting to the reader.

That, as is generally affirmed, Louis Quatorze was as remarkable for method in his personal concerns as in affairs of State, we have no stronger evidence than this singular chronicle presents. It was by the King's express command *Le Journal de la Santé du Roi* was instituted. Commenced by Valot in 1647, it was after his death continued by d'Aquin, and then by Fagon till 1711 when, unfortunately, for some reason still unknown, it closes.

This singular manuscript record in folio, magnificently bound, and in excellent preservation, forms one of the many literary treasures of the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France,* and may be seen by all. The most casual examination of its contents at once reminds us of the trite remark, so full of truth—no man is a hero to his valet; to put it stronger, to his physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries, the illustrious subject of its

pages must have simply been contemptible. Open and consult where you will, it shows a miserable patient at the mercy of the doctors of the Faculty, and in strict conformity with its rules and ordinances, bled, purged, and ptizaned—in fine, drugged to excess often in spite of himself, and unwittingly made to play the Argan to the Béralds of the comedy, court etiquette requiring that the world should know that the monarch, who laughed at medicine with his comedian, was docile as a child in the hands of its professors. In remarks and disquisitions quaint and curious, are everywhere exhibited formulas and prescriptions "inspired of heaven" for the preservation of a health so precious. Potion for the King; plaster for the King; *lavement* for the King, and so on with a richness and variety of style which does honour to the literary skill as well as the pharmaceutical imagination of these writers, and which the King no doubt read in private more for the flattery than the counsel they contained. In journalizing without end facts and details so unpleasant, the evidence of this must have been as patent to the doctors as it was unsuspected by the patient, whose *amour propre* seems here entirely to abandon him.

For ordinary readers the fascination and refinement of the reign must not be looked for in the pages of *Le Journal de la Santé du Roi.* A *bonne-bouche* for investigators of the curious in literature or art, it has remained their property. Nor has it been neglected. From the attention excited by the labours of Michelet and Sainte Beuve, its future study promises applications, and with as many objects as from points of view.

It might be thought that where those masters of research have reaped there will be little left to be gleaned by those who follow; but this cannot be said, as we shall clearly prove. The pedant entries and the comedy gave endless scope for drawing parallels. From the doctor of the Court to that of the stage there is but a step to take, and the finger might be put on many passages, which, with slight touches, would figure admirably in the Malade Imaginaire, L'Amour Médecin and the Médecin Malgré Lui. Here the eminent essayists and historians have sought the intimate memorials of the *grand monarch*, and it rests for us, within the narrow compass of our subject, to find the patient and his doctors.

VII.

SUPREME in love and war, the monarch of a reign the most brilliant and illustrious, as historically represented, Louis Quatorze seems something more than mortal. But robust must be the faith and admiration of the physician who would for a moment have us entertain an illusion so preposterous. Examined from a medical point of view this estimate vanishes; he is below the normal standard of humanity. Valot himself, the most obsequious of courtiers, is obliged to confess that the *grand monarch* is not exempt from the maladies of common men. Though the remark conveys but half the truth, it does honour to the

doctor; the fact is he was much more liable to them. In 1655, when the doctor makes his entry, the King was only seventeen years of age, and had already been a victim to small-pox, gangrene of the toes, tumours of the breast, skin disease, attacks of fevers, diarrhœa, and frequent headaches. He had been liberally bled, purged, caudled, and deluged with medicines of every kind, not to mention the outward application of plasters and pomades innumerable. It may safely be admitted that few ever underwent the like experience of drugging and disease, and fewer still who would feel disposed to accept the right divine of kings at such a price.

And this was but the prelude to a lifelong train of such afflictions. The spectacle of morbid misery the *Journal de la Santé* reveals is pitiable to contemplate. Scarcely a year passes in which the monarch is not found paying tribute to nature in the form of some serious malady or another; while reaping the consequences of gallantry, gluttony, or passion seems incessant. But to summarise, beginning from the date alluded to, we come to malignant fever, then measles of the vilest type, followed by rebellious intermittents, caries of the upper jaw, ophthalmia, luxation of the elbow joint, indolent tumours, rheumatism, gout, and gravel, vertigo, and vapours, which go on increasing in intensity till the close of life, which characteristically terminates in senile gangrene. During the lengthened martyrdom to disease, intemperance, and medicine, the treatment he endures would seem incredible. All that was palliative or

heroic of our art, as then existing, was in turn prescribed to soothe, or save a life so precious, and to an extent that it would have been difficult to find within the realm a subject more disowned of nature and despised of heaven, who was here most impartial in its dispensations.

The youth of his Majesty was marked by all the ardours, impetuosities, and maladies the age could possibly entail, which, if it leaves much to excuse, has also something to admire, the glory of the reign redeems the vices that mystery fails to veil. In manhood, favoured by a tide of fortune both in government and war, his ardours became brutal and imperious passions, which he paraded openly before the world. It is only when the tide of fortune turns he is reminded he is mortal, and chronic maladies begin. It is now the grand amours give place to dyspepsia and vertigo. But the royal patient does not cease to be gallant at the moment he commences to be gourmand. La Montespan and La Fontange for a long time keep their place at table. It is not until Madame de Maintenon is installed that the great and small amours are put to flight, that the heavy meals come into requisition to supply a solace for the ravages that death had made around his person, the miseries of war, and national ruin. For the man of fifty without mental resources and satiated with pleasures, who adds to his follies by marrying a mistress devout and middle-aged, good dinners are the only consolation left. But unfortunately the mighty monarch never knew what it was to dine

properly; he looked to quantity rather than to quality, ate much, chewed little, and digested badly. Absolute in matters of dietary as well as in government, he only had himself to please. But the stomach is no courtier, and refuses being trifled with despotically—at least with impunity, more especially when the teeth are bad, as was the case with his Majesty.

But this carries us to 1685, and consequently beyond the limits of our study. Still, long before the marriage with Madame de Maintenon, so fatal for the King and France, the journal has little else to record than vertigoes and indigestion, rheumatism and gout, fever and catarrh, chagrin and weary melancholy.

It must be confessed the portrait given us is far from fascinating; its truthfulness might even reasonably be questioned. A closer reference to the journal, however, will remove all doubts in this matter. To the curiosity of the physician royalty is no protection. Medicine, even when practised by courtiers like Valot, or intriguers like d'Aquin, must ever fail in flattering the patient. His state may be disguised, and even embellished, but, whether the result of accidents, imprudence, or excesses, malady is patent, and refuses to be pleasing. With the best will in the world, and notwithstanding all the florid phrases invented to give pleasure to his Majesty, the truth remains transparent. If the clinical remarks recorded from day to day speak for themselves, they show us also that their learned authors have other aims in view besides the pleasure of the patient, or the instruction of successors in the preservation of his Majesty's precious life. At every

page the writers vaunt their own capacity, and, showing small regard for others, naturally lay claim to a mastery of all the means then recognised. In fine, *esprit-de-corps* has limits, and these are not observed. They take credit for the use of remedies not sanctioned by the Faculty, should their experiments succeed, which happens oftener than once, as we shall see, and lead to no small scandal.

That portion of the record which comes within the limits of our survey extends from 1657 to 1674. Though not medically the most active, it shows sufficient of the medical transactions of the Court worthy to be noted, and of which, no doubt, our *comique* was the close observer. Our inspection, brief as it may be, will clearly show that he could scarce have fallen upon a field richer in material for medical observation than is here presented. But the truth is, Molière found material everywhere, as well as at the Louvre or Versailles. Still, if, as we are tempted to believe, some *confidante* of the Palace was indiscreet enough to give him access to the *Journal de la Santé*, the opportunity would not be lost. Therein he might read at leisure the learned relations of *messieurs les médecins*, and find a thousand things worth noting. For example, what could more suitably supply him with a type for consultation conflicts than those the incident of the *maladie de Calais* presents, where Valot is most comical, and the mighty Mazarin produces excellent effects.

This was in 1658, the very year the Parisians were for the first time favoured with Le Médecin Amoureux, and we have seen with what success.

The young King, while on a visit to Marduke, falling ill of fever, was conveyed to Calais, where the interest centres. Danger to a prince so idolised and full of promise caused general alarm, and not without good reason, for the case was really grave, resisting the best endeavours of the first physician. Having exhausted every means his arsenal could supply, and the seventh day passing without the hoped-for crisis, Valot summoned in all haste Guénaut, d'Aquin and others to his aid. The conference which followed, and at which the Cardinal presided, had something of solemnity about it, for it was an unusual thing to find his Excellency interfering with the doctors. And in reality the circumstance was most momentous, for besides the vital interests of State involved, there were also those of medicine—in the eyes of its professors scarcely less important. The virtues of the new remedy, antimony, were to be tested in the case—an experiment destined to set the medical world at rest. As an example of the first physician's method of reporting, and the part he makes himself perform on the occasion, we quote the following passage from the journal:—"Seeing that extreme measures are necessary to save the life of the Prince, and that the ordinary remedies, such as cassia or senna, must fail in such a case," he tells us how he urged on the Cardinal to insist on the antimony being used. The authority had its effect; with full consent the treatment was adopted. All this is very clear; but what effrontery! Valot was the most ardent blood-letter and anti-antimonialist of the conclave. It was to his colleagues the honour was due, if

there was any. The incident but illustrates his usual style of dealing when the others are concerned. The new remedy, however, was administered, and from all accounts the effects in operation were most active, but happily with no bad results, as recovery followed; the throne preserved its Prince, and, for some time at least, both the doctors and the generous nation breathed more freely.

Though Messieurs the conservatives of the Faculty sincerely sympathised in the general sentiment of gratitude, this test of the new remedy was still regarded as proof insufficient. Guy Patin, in alluding to the heaven-averted calamity, remains incredulous, and cannot help expressing it. "That continued putrid fever," says he, "had no need of the antimonial emetic, which it is announced they had given him. What saved the king was his innocence, his age, and robustness, nine good bleedings, and the prayers of worthy people like ourselves!" The opinion was without authority. Patin might protest, it was all in vain, opposition was henceforth fruitless. The future of antimony was a thing assured. If Guénaut considered that the fee he received was small, and others urged objections equally interesting, all ought to have been satisfied, as the event gave them fame beyond their day and generation.

But our worthies were not only pretentious and accommodating as physicians, they were equally so as courtiers. At the date of the *maladie de Calais* the prince was only in his twentieth year, and already Valot had supplied him with a certificate of virtue

"without example," though precisely at this time, initiated by La Beauvois, he passes to the hands of La Mancini, who completes the work. A little later, when at the height of his amour with Mdlle. de la Vallière, and the train of grand dinners were begun, his first physician finds no other explanation for his headaches and vertigo than his Majesty's arduous attention to affairs of State. And later still he goes so far as to profess that his "skill has guaranteed the realm heirs in line direct." If there was ever a doubt of such an issue the doctor lived to see it set at rest; it cannot be denied that his Majesty was perfectly successful, for the honour and glory of France, perhaps too much so.

During all the dangers to which his maladies exposed him, they never fail to note the "grandeur of his soul" in the contempt he shows for death, and in his absolute submission to their "counsels and prescriptions." But at times this virtue seems to have been over-taxed, for they are obliged to confess to certain acts of insubordination — as, for example, during the attack of measles, 1663, to please the Queen Mother, who attended on him night and day, he consented to a bleeding "in order to be in a condition to keep a party engagement arranged by the Queen at Versailles." Valot's efforts to prevent an imprudence so alarming were without effect. Though in the sixth day of the illness the self-willed prince gets up and persists in receiving company, the next day eats meat, takes an airing, and presides at council. Such a liberty was madness, but what could mortal

doctors do in a case where the patient's will was absolute? Such certificates of docility are therefore of slight value, and were no doubt written to give pleasure to his Majesty, and often when least merited. Valot is more to be believed when he assures us of his firmness under bistoury and the actual cautery. The operation for fistula and caries, says he, "he sustained with all the courage possible." The surgeons seem to have suffered more than the patient, and this we can readily believe. It was neither pain nor danger so much as the inconvenience the *grande malade* found insupportable.

At the date of the attack of measles, which is the third historic malady, the condition of the patient suddenly changes. He is no longer liable to acute diseases, but only to infirmities and affections that assume a chronic form, according as they develope themselves, and tend to be persistent. It is vertigoes and vapours which now predominate, and which Valot attributes to excess of work, d'Aquin to other causes; and which, later on, Fagon, with hardihood, declares arise from the handling of papers too much perfumed. It was sad the poor King could not read the *billet doux* of Madame de Maintenon without being seized with "vertigo, accompanied with fatigue and persistent yawning." The only relief to such a train of symptoms was military campaigning, with all its mental occupation and fatigue—a circumstance constantly remarked, but never of long continuance. Returning to Court life, with all its vices and excesses, renewed suffering was inevitable, and medicine a

necessity. When Boileau sings the passage of the Rhine, and promises to lead him to the shores of the Hellespont, d'Aquin makes the remark that, "In consequence of the close attention of his Majesty to affairs of State, he has lost capacity and inclination to take exercise." Though only thirty-four years of age, he is already excessively obese and old. Things get worse till the spring of 1674, when, with Holland, the Empire, the Allies, and Madame Maintenon to boot, on his hands, he once more takes the field; it is his last relief. Peace restored, and the excesses of the Court resumed, he sinks into the groove of suffering and infirmity from which he never rallies.

It must now be evident that it is to indulgence and caprice that we are almost always forced to attribute the indisposition of his Majesty. There are, however, instances in which the fault is not all his own. For example, the Palace of Versailles, and the retreat of Marly, splendid as they were, had little of the comfort or convenience one might naturally suppose of royal residences. The chambers being ill-constructed and defective, both in size and ventilation, the journal shows the King much inconvenienced by extremes of heat and cold, dampness and *punaises!* not to mention the fumes of toilet powder and tobacco of a crowd of courtiers continually in waiting. Of causes easier to control, which the physicians have constantly to combat are manifest imprudences, and some of them curious to note, amongst them the agreeable pastime of paring his own toe-nails and corns, which is followed by fatigue; the pernicious habit of incessantly changing

his wig, which exposes him to colds; the rehearsal of the ballet—an exercise for which he has a veritable passion—aggravates his chest affection; while riding out and hunting, no matter how the wind may blow, bring ague, rheumatism, and the like. In fine, we find morbid causes lurking whichever way the poor King turns himself; even his attention to religious duties is not free from danger. But this leads us to more important principles of moderation which he is found continually offending against, and for which the penalty follows with as little interruption. The fast-days, for instance, are remarked particularly as unfavourable, in consequence of the quantity of sturgeon and other kinds of fish with which he fills his royal stomach. In the observance of Lent he shows himself so rigorous that nothing can persuade him to infringe "the spirit or the letter of the ordinances of Mother Church—not even when medically necessary!" Valot and d'Aquin have too often reason to complain of prolonged devotions and excessive Lenten fare—so excessive and pernicious that it seldom fails to excite intestinal derangements the most tempestuous. When he consents to confine himself to a regimen too substantial for any other than himself, the courtiers interfere—find it lowering and insufficient, and, contrary to the rules of good hygiene, undo their wisest counsels. Then comes the revenge, in the repasts of grossest dishes, more remarkable for mass than elegance, and naturally followed by consequences sometimes grave enough, and which try the skill and patience of the doctors.

Great is the temptation to enlarge our references to this unique record, but it would lead beyond the scope of our study. It is to be regretted; still, if our notice is brief, enough has been advanced to illustrate our point, and even to show how admirable a subject for a special medical study the grand monarch presents. This is not our object; still we cannot help observing that the opportunity his personality offered for experimental medicine was not entirely lost to science, in spite of the protests of the Faculty. It is to his treatment that we owe the triumph of antimony, chinchona, and ipecacuanha; facts, though not generally known, are proofs that even for medicine his existence had its uses.

The reader may perhaps feel some regret to find the favourite monarch set off in such a morbid light. Though the fault is not ours, the sentiment has our sympathies, and happily without derogating in the least from statements given, the following final remarks may somewhat qualify the picture.

Seeing that our doctors find so much to journalize, it is curious to note what they have got to say about the patient's temperament. As a physiological point of capital importance at this period, it was much contested. It is admitted on all hands that it is heroic like that of all the great, but its closer definition varies. While Valot maintains that the melancholic predominates, d'Aquin, who sees bile everywhere and speaks of it incessantly, holds that it was bilious, which was not the same thing, seeing that melancholy was associated with the spleen and

not with the liver. Fagon, who had small respect for the latter's views, inclines to those of Valot. Little as one might suppose the discussion of such a subtle question to admit of courtly flattery, it nowhere shows more strongly, and as the doctors treat the knotty point in all the style of the *médecin molieresque*, this feature gives additional flavour to the controversial passages. Fagon, however, really a man of science and the most reliable authority, from all that we can gather from his entries, holds that the constitutional habit of the King was composite, that generally recognised as the Lymphatico-sanguine, like that of all the Bourbons. Though constantly in need of doctors and drugging—from what we can gather from the journal of the first physicians, as also those of Saint-Simon and the Marquis Dangeau, there can be little doubt or uncertainty on the subject—the constitutional habit was really excellent and powerfully resistant. Inflictions in the form of disease and medicine failed to overcome him, and he bore his bodily fatigues and mental agitations all the more successfully as misfortune tended to humble him and the throne.

Though dying at the age of seventy-five, and surviving more than twenty years of power and glory, the King was to the last perfect in the eyes of women and the estimation of his people. This is much to say. No doubt the century reflects on him its lustre, still he justly remains its central attraction; and regarded from any point of view you please, it is a prejudice some modern writers indulge in to see in both

him and his reign a national misfortune. The period of the monarchy cannot be reduced to the level of a train of errors moral, religious, and political. Writers, who are diposed to regard it and its brilliant representative in such a light, seek for its history in the secrets of the ante-chamber, and the pages of the *Journal de la Santé*. This method is not ours. We have been examining the personality of the poet's royal protector purely for professional objects, our opinion must not be pressed beyond its limits. When we assert that Louis Quatorze was mediocre in character and a detestable patient, we are merely speaking medically, and the corrections of the estimate may be readily admitted. As a monarch he knew how to govern everybody but himself. Sick or infirm, for nearly sixty years he never allowed a subject into his presence who had the least indisposition, and by some personal charm himself seemed always *le beau roi*. As Saint Simon finely expresses it, he knew how to guard the majesty of rank under circumstances where one would least expect to find it.

IX.

M. DAREMBERG, in an instructive essay on Louis XIV. and his medical advisers, divides the *Grand Monarque's* medical experiences from the cradle to the grave into three periods, the first ending with the *Maladie de Calais*, and the last beginning with the king's marriage with Madame de Maintenon. It is that part of the middle period, extending from 1647-74, that Molière's critique covers; during which, at least, his observation was directed seriously to the medicine and the medical practitioners, legitimate and illegitimate, of the reign; to the physicians in the service of the Court particularly. M. Reynaud, who is the chief authority regarding the medical contemporaries of our comique, has spared himself no pains in the endeavour to identify those of them whom the comedian had in his eye when dealing with the doctors of the Faculty, and supplies us with much valuable information curious to refer to. But if it may be asked where Molière found the originals from which he drew, it may safely be said that he found them everywhere—in life, in practice, in the medical writings of the day; he took them, in fact, like his many other good things, as he himself says, wherever he could find them.

This reflection sufficiently satisfies artistic demands, but the question as to who these models actually were, and what is known of them, strongly interests us. For this reason we would willingly restore to recogni-

tion those most in repute at Court in the poet's day—make, as it were, the acquaintance of his acquaintances in the world of medicine. Familiar with the first physicians to his Majesty, we would then know something of their colleagues, the physicians-in-ordinary. While Molière was playing to command, dining at the royal table, and in turn with his fellow valets making the royal bed, he had ample opportunities of knowing them. Though enjoying place and pension at the Court, and participating in the fortunes of their patrons, they may merit less attention than d'Aquin and Valot, but to three at least this remark will not apply, for, thanks to the comedian, they have a notoriety which promises to last. These were—Des Fougerais, Esprit, and Guénaut, already mentioned, and as, according to contemporary writers, they were of the quartette whose absurdities enrich the comedy of L'Amour Médecin, a few particulars, personal and biographic, may not be unwelcome.

Des Fougerais, from all accounts that can be gathered of him, was a person of some means, great assurance, and knowledge of the world, which he knew how to make use of. In this it would seem he quite succeeded, notwithstanding a serious inconvenience, for he was first physician to the Queen Mother. For an elegant practitioner he had a serious natural defect; he halted in his gait—a point for mimicry which must have taken with the audiences of the *Petit-Bourbon*, where there is little doubt Béjar, with his noted limp, performed the part. Singular to note in the profession of the time, he was a Protestant, but

finally returned to the Mother Church—in fact, with some parade. His sincerity may have been as sound as that of others, but Guy Patin, who has seldom much good to say of anyone, appears to estimate it quite as lightly as he does the rest. "I verily believe," he writes, "that if the fellow thought that there was a greater charlatan than himself in the world he would try to poison him. He has his pocket full of powders, black, white, and yellow. He cures all sorts of disease, and thrusts himself in everywhere. He pretends to cure everybody, and pledges himself to do so, and knows better than all others how—declares that so and so can bleed and purge, but that he possesses the grand secrets. Crafty and detestable old charlatan, if ever there was one! But, as they say, he is a godly man. Yes, who would never have changed his religion but to make money, and advance the interests of his family."

This portrait is not flattering. Though coming from the pen of one who was no admirer, judging from what others have said of him, it may not be overdrawn. It is certain that on one occasion, at least, he was obliged to submit to a reprimand of the Faculty for conduct not quite consistent with the dignity and honour of that august fraternity. The charge was criminal, and if well founded the title given him in the comedy is no misnomer.

Less is known of Esprit. We find him in the service of Richelieu, and afterwards with Mazarin—a certificate of competence in itself. His chief personal peculiarity, and one which clung to him

upon the stage, was an impediment in his speech. This defect, however, does not seem to have been an obstacle in the way of his success; as a popular practitioner he stood well with the Court. As we have seen, he figured in the consultation of the *Maladie de Calais*, and even by some received the credit of suggesting the *vin émétique;* and the adoption of the measure may be explained by his influence with the Cardinal. But here we must again quote Guy Patin, who is no friend of either, and treats them both as he does the rest: "This is a fine political policy of our age. Just think of the physician of the heir to the crown, the immediate successor, *adhibetur in consilium pro rege, et venenatum stibium audet præscribere.* Supposing this done, and that the king had died, his master would have been king, and he his first physician—*non sic erat in principio.* In times past the physicians of the princes of the royal blood were never called in when kings were ill, and for good political reasons; now-a-days all this is reversed." But this is not quite conclusive, and may be regarded as an orthodox sarcasm in Patin's usual vein when speaking of the Court physicians; still it shows that Esprit's importance had its *raison d'être.*

Esprit, however, as we have seen, was not allowed the entire monopoly of the *éclat* on the occasion of the *Maladie de Calais.* Guénaut was the most ardent partizan of the *émétique,* and as was alleged, antimony alone had made three-fourths of his fortune, which was far from inconsiderable—in

fact, his reputation was identified with that of the specific—

> "On compterait plutot combien en un printemps
> Guénaut et l'antimoine ont fait mourir de gents."

The most popular and distinguished practitioner of the period, he became *l'ancien de l'École*, for which, unlike his colleagues of the Louvre, he never ceased to testify his great attachment. The Court and City swore by him; from being physician to the Prince de Condé he came to serve the Queen in such capacity, and in his long career had frequently been called upon to treat the ailments of every one of the princes of the blood royal. His personality may be conceived. Though Patin says he had much of monkey trickery about him, this must be taken with some caution. In mien and manner there was much distinction; his solemn measured speech—which is his stage characteristic—and *recherché* style of costume, added to his high social connections, made him the *grand seigneur* of the Court physicians; at this time he certainly was the one it required the most courage to attack.

Such are some of the historic features of the *médecins à la mode*, the physicians of the Court whom Molière has immortalized in L'Amour Médecin.

This charming and instructive comedy was produced in 1665, and for the special delectation of the King and Court. It was first represented at Versailles, the sacred haunt of those who were its victims. There was something of audacity in the poet, while still under the ban of censure consequent on his collision

with the devotees, daring to burlesque members of another honourable profession, and who, with all their foibles, were respected by the *noblesse* and other influential orders of society. Nor does the King escape the charge of undue levity, in assisting at the singular exhibition of his worthy household officers. If the truth could be reached, the piece and its allusions were perhaps well known to him before it was produced, and not without his approval. Nor would this be anything very surprising. The King was young, and just escaping from the restraints of tutelage a taste for the livelier comedy, and the society of the *comique*, would be nothing more than natural. In fact, the belief may well be justified that Molière had a licence for the liberty he took, and felt easy as to consequences. As for those who were assailed, it was their interest to keep silent, and so far as can be ascertained, that feeling was prudently observed.

But causes deeper and more sympathetic may reasonably be assigned for this mark of undignified indulgence. Though young in years, the King, as we have seen, had already been as much the victim of the ignorance and blundering of the doctors as any of his subjects. His terrible experience both in medicine and in surgery might well excuse the feeling and the apologetic sentiment he, under similar circumstances, gave expression to. "Why should we not sometimes be permitted to laugh at those who so often make us weep?"—an observation no less memorable than it was *à propos*.

At all events, it would appear that he and the

Court were not only amused, they were also well prepared to appreciate the mimic scenes, not far removed from the reality—it might even be said, with which they were familiar. Instances of medical dissension and cabal at any time were commonplace, but immediately before this date a case occurred of more than usual significance, and justly calculated to bring contempt on the *élite* of the fraternity. This was the fatal illness of the Cardinal Mazarin, the great minister, who lay bedrid at the Château de Vincennes. Being at the point of death, four of the most eminent of the profession were summoned to a consultation, and decide upon the nature of his malady. These were d'Aquin, Des Fougerais, Esprit, and Guénaut. Much contention and difference of opinion was the result of this memorable conference, and it was publicly reported. Esprit maintained that the spleen was the offending organ; Guénaut affirmed that the liver was at fault; Des Fougerais declared there was an abscess of the mesentery; while d'Aquin saw water on the chest and an affection of the lungs. If their science claimed to be positive, all could not be right in their diagnosis, and the circumstance becoming known, excited in no small degree the criticisms of the livelier Parisians of every class, always ready for a laugh at the expense of medicine and its professors.

These and other scandals of the day attracting general attention, must have made L'Amour Médecin a welcome entertainment for the audiences of the *Petit-Bourbon*. The comic elements, so startling in their actuality, the famous consultation supplied were

carried even to the dress, personal peculiarities, and medical phraseology—points in which Molière had not all the honour of invention, for Boileau, who got the credit of devising Greek names for the doctors, which implied their personal characteristics, had some share in the success. Des Fougerais is *Desfonandrés*, slayer of men; Esprit, with his stutter, is *Bahis*; Guénaut, with his measured speech, is *Macraton*; while d'Aquin, with his authoritativeness, is *Tomés*. The last named, however, is not so certain. M. Reynaud surmises that this practitioner had not yet attained sufficient advancement, and was besides, rated as an antimonialist. It is possible that Valot was the fourth; he, as we have seen, was first at Court, and a mighty bleeder. But the identity is of little moment; as an art ideal we have a type here which, as elsewhere, Molière shows himself singularly felicitous in creating. If there could be any doubt of the facility with which the portraits were recognised, the authority of Guy Patin should be considered as decisive. Nothing escapes him that concerns the cloth, and he informs us in a letter to a friend that "All Paris runs in crowds to see the Court physicians represented on the stage—Esprit and Guénaut in particular, Des Fougerais along with them. Such is the way they ridicule those who kill people with impunity." From the mediocre estimate the worthy Dean has of the dignified official brethren, we may easily imagine the pleasure the circumstance would afford him.

X.

It was for the audiences and play-going public of the day that the caricature of the L'Amour Médecin performances possessed a special interest: what concerns us are the dramatic situations and the reflex of professional mannerisms that the play supplies. With this in view, let us call to mind the features of the charming little comedy, with its amusing plot and personages drawn from those ever fresh and inexhaustible sources of human nature—first love, paternal affection, and faith in physic, with the thousand follies and caprices it is eternally presenting.

Here we have again the favourite Molièresque *rôle* of Sganarelle—on this occasion the father of a family, bourgeois, irritable, but affectionate withal, by no means the least interesting of the many-sided character this personage presents. Lucinde, the only daughter, on whom he lavishes his whole affections, he purposes to marry to a suitor of his own choice, according to the honourable traditional bourgeois manners of that age. But the wayward young lady, whose heart is already won, objects to being bartered, and in order to escape that fate feigns serious illness, which alarms the adoring but despotic parent. Four doctors of the Faculty are forthwith summoned, and the learned Messieurs Desfonandrés, Macroton, Tomés, and Bahis by name, little suspecting the sickness is assumed, consult upon the nature of the case, and naturally disagreeing, by an ingenious stratagem of

the *soubrette*, Lisette, their place is soon supplied, and by a practitioner of a class equally pretentious, but who is a *médecin en dehors*, a stranger to the Faculty. In fine, the young Clitandre, who is the genuine lover of Lucinde, is introduced as a celebrated *médecin ambulant*, capable of making marvellous cures. His services are accepted and an interview permitted, with results most satisfactory to their mutual interests. The opinion of the new arrival is that the case is one of pure insanity, marked by a fixed idea of the necessity of immediate marriage. As the only means of destroying the illusion he proposes to indulge the patient's fancy by the performance of the ceremony, and, to save time and trouble, he most gallantly volunteers to play the bridegroom's part himself. The anxious and confiding father, happy to admit of any harmless stratagem that will restore his daughter to her natural senses, too readily accedes. The notary is called in, consent is given to the union, the contract duly signed, and all confirmed by the putting of the ring on the finger of the bride. A marriage is really performed before poor Sganarelle discovers he is duped.

Such is the intrigue of this small domestic farce, which occupied the poet three days in composing. So trifling is it that one would scarce expect to find much material for serious comment in its incidents, characters, or dialogue. In proof of this we must look into it more closely, in the process keeping to the elements which are strictly medical.

First comes the consultation. The doctors having

visited the patient, make their appearance on the scene: receiving their fees in advance, in allusion to the nefarious practice of their day, they are then left alone to learnedly deliberate and prescribe without interruption or delay. It might be imagined that the conference would pass with all the decorum and urgency the young and interesting patient's case required, but this must not be thought of; like Sganarelle we have to do with doctors. These worthies, finding they have all the stage to themselves, first give the formal cough, then take their places, and the séance begins. But instead of addressing themselves to the matter they are there to consider, they begin forthwith to gossip about trifles altogether foreign, in which the comparative merits of Tomés' mule and Desfonandrés' horse have the first attention.

Until about this time it had been customary for doctors to parade the streets of Paris on their hybrids, with huge *perruques* and patriarchal beards. To ride a mule was supposed to confer a dignified and somewhat episcopal character. When Guénaut, like a daring innovator, began to make his visits on horseback, such a violation of traditional usage created quite a scandal—a novelty to which Boileau and other humorists make allusion. But the question of animal precedence had a deeper meaning. It was in reality the struggle between the old light and the new. Nor was the old so badly represented in its humility; still, their modesty on other points was less apparent. The magisterial robe, *rabat*, and red shoes was *de rigueur*, and Pascal cannot see how people could put confidence

in doctors otherwise attired. But the mode was not entirely of their own choosing, a proof that the national legislation in trifling matters is not quite a thing of yesterday; a Parliamentary decree made it imperative. To judge, however, from the prevailing attachment to appearances and formalities, it must not be supposed that the injunction was otherwise than welcome. For this very reason the doctors and their peculiarities enjoyed much popular favour. The following *épigramme de rue* is an example of the allusion to the items of costume, coupled with another extravagance characteristic of our members of the Faculty:—

"Affecter un air pedantesque
Cracher du grec et du latin
Longue perruque, habit grotesque,
De la fourrure et du satin,
Tout cela réuni fait presque
Ce qu'on appelle un Médecin."

But the conversation *àpropos* of mounts leads them deeper into forms professional, and subjects still more delicate. These were the rules or statutes that guided them in their consultations. It will now be interesting to see to what extent they justify the delicious parody. If we are to believe Riolin, everything was as it ought to be on such occasions. "The harmony of our consultations is admirable," says he. "Everyone is free to give his opinion, and allowed to speak in turn; to comment modestly but without animosity or passion upon the previous opinion, all according to the spirit that Hippocrates so strictly enjoins or lays down." No doubt Hippocrates is right, as he always is, but perhaps

it would have been more satisfactory if Riolin had given us a proof that his precepts were generally observed. However, the statutes of the Faculty were clear as to this point of their duty, "In consultations the youngest are the first to give their opinion and according to their promotion to the doctorate. What is decided on by the majority is, with the consent of the colleagues, communicated by the oldest to the patient, relations, and those in charge."

Here, then, the *rôle* of the senior is clearly defined; Molière interprets it in his own way. A quarrel has arisen between two practitioners, Artémius and Théophraste, and is causing a division of opinion in the body. M. Tomés is for Artémius. "It is not that his opinion did not kill the patient, as we have seen, and Théophraste's view was assuredly very little better, but at all events he was wrong under the circumstances, as he ought not to have been of any other opinion than that of his senior consultant." We see that M. Tomés is before everything rigorously a formalist, and warming with his subject he proceeds to illustrate this in his own conduct in such a case, and thus discloses another point still more interesting. He continues: "One day three of us met for consultation with another who was not of our Faculty—*un médecin de dehors*—but I stopped the whole proceedings and would not hear of anyone giving an opinion unless the rules were strictly observed." A medical outsider! Who could he possibly be but a doctor of Montpellier, or some provincial empiric? The idea of Tomés consenting to consult with him. Not at all

likely. And "the patient died bravely during the contest! There you see what may result when rules or forms are not observed." As he very consistently remarks in conclusion, "A dead man is only a dead man—a thing of little consequence—but a violation of professional etiquette is most highly prejudicial to the whole medical body." On this point the institutes were formal.

Without speaking of the doctors of Montpellier—honourable graduates notwithstanding—Paris was then inundated, as it is to-day, with charlatans of every kind, whom it was necessary to oppose. Vendors of orviétan, itinerant practitioners, fortune-tellers, had no reason to complain of want of confidence among the better classes; even *les belles Marquises* and *grands Seigneurs*, if strongly sceptical in medicine, showed robust faith in quackery. Allowing the usual liberty and licence for the comedy, this sufficiently explains the spirit of the doctors of the Faculty, as well as the *rôle* of the *médecin improvis*, with which the medical comedies of Molière abound. Of this we have an excellent example in Clitandre, transformed into a chiromancer, and possessing remedies different from those of others—"they have the emetic, bleeding, medicines and *lavements*. But as for him, he cures by words, by sounds, by letters, by talismans, and constellated rings." This was trespassing on the privileged domain. Now, to combat rivals, the first thing to be done was to refuse to consult with them—a duty in which it would be difficult to believe a member of the Faculty could fail. But ought we to conclude that

the comedy was wrong, and that even among friends misunderstandings were unfrequent? This would be showing small knowledge of human nature, especially that of the doctors. In this particular Molière is strongly in the right, and the picture he has left us of the petty jealousies, rivalries, and passions, is as true of our own times as of his. In seeing the ever-truthful pictures of our own follies we must admit them as he wished, or correct them if we can.

Here, then, in the comic consultation, we see what at times takes place. The droll deliberations interrupted by Sganarelle demanding and pressing for an opinion — all persist in speaking at once till, the difficulty overcome, Tomés gives it as his opinion that the patient's malady "proceeds from a great heat of the blood," and recommends immediate bleeding. Desfonandrés, who sees "putrefaction of the humours," advises the emetic. Tomés maintains that "the emetic will kill her." Desfonandrés declares that "to bleed her she will die." High words, mutual charges of malpraxis, and other recriminations ensue, till, furious with rage, they finally withdraw from the consultation.

Macroton and Bahis, now left in possession of the field, in turn proceed to settle matters. From careful diagnosis Macroton finds the case is chronic, and of greatest danger, the symptoms indicating that "vapours, fuliginous and penetrating, have attacked the cerebral membranes." Bahis coincides with this view of the case, and points out other facts which make the pathological condition still more compli-

cated. The ground thus cleared, Macroton sententiously proceeds to lay down the scientific measures necessary to expel the "offending humours," in which vigorous purgation takes the lead; and continuing, observes that "when all has been said and done it is possible the girl will die; but that in any case it will be consolatory to feel that the patient has died according to the forms." Bahis strengthens the sentiment of the remark by observing that "it is doubtless better to die according to the rules than escape by practically infringing them." They then make their exit, leaving poor Sganarelle a prey to anxious fears, and ready to confide his daughter to the mercy of a charlatan, who offers him more hope, a proceeding which is finally adopted.

In the practice of reality such scenes have their inconveniences; as things are constituted here below, nothing else need be expected. Molière, however, as master of his own creations, may dispose of them otherwise, and in representing such professional faults he happily provides for their correction. If his comical doctors quarrel, M. Filerin, a senior *confrère*, is introduced to conciliate them in the name of their common interests, in pointing out the evil of exposing the absurdities of their science and disturbing the sweet illusions the love of life in man gives rise to, which are the very makers of their fortunes.

Addressing Tomés and Desfonandrés, still heated with the contest, Filerin begins:—"Gentlemen, are you not ashamed at your age to show so little prudence thus to go quarrelling like young madcaps? Do you

not know how great is the injury these disputes do us in public estimation? Is it not enough that the learned should know the contradictions and dissensions that exist among our authors, ancient and modern, without exposing still more to the world, by your debates and contentions, the absurdities of our art? As for me, it is quite impossible to comprehend the mischievous policy of some amongst us, for it must be owned that these disagreements have lately singularly injured our position, and if we are not more upon our guard we shall work our own ruin. I do not speak in my own interests; thank God, I have already made my pile. Blow, hail, rain, as it may, those who are dead are dead; I have sufficient to make me independent of the living. However, all these disputes profit medicine nothing. Since heaven has vouchsafed that for so many centuries people should be infatuated with us, why should you disabuse their minds with your extravagant cabals? Why not rather let us continue to profit by their follies as pleasantly as possible? You know we are not the only class who strive to live on the weaknesses of humanity. . . . The greatest frailty in mankind is their love of life, and we profit by it with our own pompous humbug, and know how to take advantage of the veneration for our calling which the fear of death occasions. Let us then preserve that high esteem they in their weakness entertain for us; let us by all means strive to be of one accord in the presence of the patient, so that when Nature cures the disease we may the better ascribe it to our art, and throw on her the onus of the failures.

Do not let us persist in exploding foolishly the erroneous impressions which make the livings of so many, and which, from the wealth of those we send to the grave, enable us on all hands to amass such handsome fortunes."

What advice could possibly be more disinterested or happier? In the given case it proved sufficient, for M. Filerin succeeds with little difficulty in effecting a reconciliation. "I yield at once," says M. Desfonandrés; "let M. Tomés only admit of my emetic in the present case and I pledge myself to agree to everything he may feel disposed to prescribe for the next patient we may be called upon to treat together!" Nothing could possibly be more accommodating.

By the satiric *rôle* of the medical councillor it has been supposed that Molière intended to personify the united wisdom of the faculty, but this has been disputed. Filerin is supposed to be derived from the Greek φίλος ἔρεβος — friend of death, but M. Raynaud thinks the derivation forced, and if students must have a *Greek* root suggests it is in φίλος ἔρις, friend of litigation. This, he thinks, would be more appropriate, for if ever a corporation was given to law and litigation, it was the faculty of medicine. In its maintenance of ancient privileges it kept the Courts of Parliament well employed; besides, this conception, if correct, adds more point to the satire, for what could be more comical than to find a body proverbially dictatorial and quarrelsome preaching harmony and conformity among themselves, in order that they might the more profitably have all the field in monopoly.

However this may be, the ethical doctrine of the profession, with which Molière enlivens his precious morsel of oratory, is of the richest kind; a feature in its way remarkable, and whose philosophy we shall consider in another section when treating specially on the subject.

XI.

AT this juncture Molière, who three years previously had espoused one of his company, was still living with his wife, though under very strained relations. The circumstance is for us important, as it discloses certain phases of contemporary theatrical life curious to note and interesting to refer to.

The union, which was incompatible from the first, proved most unfortunate. The poet's position as a husband was not long a happy one, and painfully influenced his future professional as well as private life, the latter more especially. Mlle. Armande Béjart, in all her youth and beauty, was no sooner Madame Molière, wife of the celebrated dramatic poet and comedian—formerly her guardian—and allowed to grace the footlights, than she quickly became not only the favourite of the popular audiences, but an especial object of attraction for the courtier *habitués* — a homage which her vanity and love of admiration readily led her to accept. Artistic reputation being then, as always, public property, her conduct soon gave

rise to scandal, which, no doubt, became exaggerated and embellished as time went on, or as sympathies changed incidence. Certain it is that the coquetry of Armande too often put her over-susceptible and doting spouse's head and heart to direst tests. The fault, however, it should be remembered, was not all on Madame Molière's side, whatever the poet's worshippers may advance—far from it. Molière's conduct, both before and after marriage, was anything but irreproachable. It was well known that after having lived with Madeleine Béjart, his fellow-actress, for years, he transferred his affections to Mlle. de Brie, another of this company, later on abandoning her to marry his young *protégée*, Armande, who was in some way closely related to his earlier mistress; and when at length Armande's faithless conduct brought about a separation, it was to Mlle. de Brie that he again returned for consolation. Nor does this exhaust the list of his affinities; certain Mlles. Menou and Duparc found favour in his sight, thus securing from posterity a fame and reputation otherwise little merited.

All this known and acknowledged, considerations of strong passion, tender-heartedness and need of female sympathy, in the way of exculpation, become unnecessary and even out of place; moral laxity was licensed in the Molièresque domain, and if our poet seems to have earned any marked distinction in this respect, it must be attributed to his superior opportunities, stronger passions, and the easier virtues of his female followers. As the head of his troupe, and obliged to maintain a kind of family intimacy with

its members, it is needless to say that he merely lived in full conformity with the manners and customs which were associated with the mummers' life. How could it be otherwise? The *roman comique*, whether fixed or *ambulant*, could scarcely be conducive to the stricter social notions of morality, notions which, however necessary, imaginative genius and artistic talent find somewhat embarrassing—a something not always quite convenient. Had Molière, who was both a philosopher and a moralist by nature, at this time seriously desired the model life, the mission which he had entered on so young was perhaps the worst adapted for its cultivation. In his position he was, it may be, more than others worthy of another and a more presentable certificate of character than has been bequeathed us of him; but the stage was the medium in which he not only lived and moved, it was what he loved the most; its influence absorbed him, and, like many men of wiser heads and harder hearts, we find his life in all things quite consistent with his surroundings.

Inconstant and capricious in his amatory attachments—as has often been remarked in natures such as his—it was precisely the love the least accessible that he desired and coveted. It was the love for the fickle, faithless Armande that Molière till his death sighed so much for as a right and a necessity, partly, it might be, from souvenirs he feignedly ignored, and which need not here be mentioned, but more we should suppose from an unconquerable longing for a love and confidence unattainable.

Deceived, rejected, and, as we shall see, deeply wounded in his honour, no resource remained for him in his miseries save the faded favours of Mlle. de Brie and the active duties of his calling. De Brie, with Chapelle, might share the poet's heart-felt confidences, but not entirely; in both his acting and his writings the irrepressible sense—poignant or ridiculous—of his matrimonial position from first to last involuntarily betrayed itself. In L'École des Femmes, produced within a year after his marriage, it is generally acknowledged we have already indications that a matrimonial change of scene had taken place; that fond illusions were already dissipating, giving place to apprehensions of the falsé step he had taken, now irrevocable. Molière may be seen but half concealed behind Arnolphe, who has adopted and cherished Agnès with a view to marriage, but who is sure to deceive him precisely as Molière himself has been deceived by Armande, whom he had similarly reared and cherished. And here the comique is no longer in a laughing mood, or, if he laughs, it is through his tears. But, not to dwell on data which after all may be considered little definite, it will be well to bear in mind, as has been already noted, that it was in the midst of all these heartburnings and domestic miseries that were produced the Mariage Forcé, La Princesse d'Élide, Don Juan, Le Festin de Pierre, and finally, L'Amour Médecin, the comedy we have been considering, but which still demands some further notice.

Brought out at the close of the year, L'Amour

Médecin was popularly a great success. At the Louvre, where its personages and broad humour made a strong impression, it was performed night after night to crowded houses for several weeks—a thing unprecedented in the theatre of that day. The awakened curiosity very naturally gave rise to speculation and surmise as to the author's motive for producing such a piquant satire; the actual causes, of course, were overlooked, and motives purely personal alleged—amongst others, a grudge against the doctors in consequence of a quarrel in which Madame Molière and the wife of one of the medical fraternity were concerned. The story gained currency some time after the poet's death, and was generally accepted. Though often repeated by his biographers, the truth is the quarrel was the result and not the cause of the comic satire, and this is now the proper place to mention it.

What, then, was the nature of the whole affair? Something very ordinary, for we have it this time on the authority of one who wrote while Molière was still alive—a literary rival, little friendly, it is true, but for that very reason all the more reliable. This writer, who will be more fully mentioned in another section, furnishes the particulars of the incident and its consequences; details which lose nothing of their force in narration, as he makes the comedian tell his own story, and which runs somewhat in the following strain:—"Alas!' L'Amour Médecin, that excellent comedy, which so amused the Court and made the people laugh, that *chef-d'œuvre*, too much for the doctors, made enemies of these assassins who conspired

against me. As an instance, one of them from whom I rented a house, without giving reason or excuse, served me with notice to quit. Resenting the affront and refusing to vacate my quarters, the doctor raised my rent. Heaven knows whether the tooth he drew increased my indignation. I, however, kept that to myself, and some time afterwards, when the storm had passed and my lease was renewed and signed, I determined to pay him back in his own coin, and luckily I had soon the opportunity." And he continues to relate how one evening Madame Molière, having observed the wife of the doctor at the theatre, ordered the assistants to put her to the door. The husband, feeling himself outraged, raised a cabal and summoned the comedian to appear before the magistrate, who from some friendly bias in his favour dismissed the case. The offended doctor, furiously demanding justice, did his utmost to renew the plaint, but all in vain.

"Taisez vous, me dit-on, petit vendeur de baume;
Et croyez vous un Esculape est plus digne que Mome."

The comedian was triumphant. Still the *fracas* cost him dearly; the whole affair was too much for his nervous sensibilities, and almost proved his death-blow; he fell seriously ill, and found himself, though much against his will, given over to the not over tender mercies of his implacable enemies of the faculty. Without his knowledge the doctors were called in by his wife; they no sooner saw the patient than the urgency of the case and the mode of treatment was on the *tapis*. The whole scene of the

famous consultation of the comedy was repeated in his presence. Between the lancet and the antimonial emetic opinions were divided; noisily contesting, all at length agreed to enforce both measures. For a long time he remained the victim of their practice, but by rare good fortune, finally recovering, he confesses that in his dire extremity he was not entirely without consolation, as he witnessed with some pleasure the scientific absurdities of the doctors of L'Amour Médecin, adding:—

> **" J'admirai mes copies en les origineaux,**
> **Et je tirai mon bien d'ou j'avais pris mes maux."**

Such are the details of the incident, characteristic enough of the life and vicissitudes of a struggling player and a poet, and which bears all the stamp of probability, as we cannot for an instant suppose that the poet's war against the doctors had anything to do with feelings of revenge. To attribute his comic *chef-d'œuvre* to circumstances so trivial and contemptible as the raising of his rent or indulging the spite or caprice of his wife would be to ignore his genius. Be that as it may, all information on the point is welcome even when coming from an enemy, and we may readily admit that the comedian would be only too ready to profit by the incident in comically charging both scenes and characters in his subsequent medical essays.

On this episode came the culmination of domestic disorder consequent on the facts and fictions which the *Fameuse Comédienne Chronique* some time afterwards disclosed. The scandalous intrigues of the Belle

Armande with the notorious Don Juan, the Marquis de Lauzun, had been followed by another with the equally notorious Lovelace, the Count de Guiche; and if the referred-to *Annals de Boudoir* are to be credited, the Abbé de Richelieu has to be added to the heroes named. This state of things could scarcely endure, even on the most accommodating matrimonial terms. Marital relations having gradually ceased and separation become imperative, Molière finally betook himself to the Auteuil retreat to nurse, in silence, his lost love and chagrin; sorrows which the tender attachment of Mlle. de Brie failed to soothe, and which the cynical twittings of his boon companion Chapelle only aggravated. In the eyes of the Bohemian the amative susceptibilities of the poet were childish and absurd; comparing him with his goddesses, Madeleine, Armande, and de Brie to Jupiter and his trio, Juno, Pallas, and Venus, was a master-stroke of ridicule, seeing that the two potentates, though heaven and earth apart, were, when subjected to the like embarrassment, alike helpless in their plight.

But the poet's miseries at this time seem to have had merely the effect of exalting his inventive genius and turning it in a fresh direction; for, but a few months after, that is, in the middle of the following year—1666—appeared the Misanthrope, admittedly a reflex of his case, and Parisians crowding to enjoy the charming comedy, little dreamed how much of the character and sentiment of the man was there laid bare not only in outline, but in detail; life, home, and heart were, so to say, offered as a pleasure-pastime for

the public, and that in his Alceste, Céliméne and the courtiers are seen but thinly masked the personalities of himself and those who caused his troubles. Much shaken both in mind and body, the raptures with which the piece was received proved a temporary stay, but as the furore subsided he realised his real condition, and found it necessary to suspend performances for a time.

In the interval was written the Médecin Malgré Lui. With forces restored, the Misanthrope was again put upon the stage with the new farce as after-piece, wherein under the emotions and final utterances of the sombre Alceste, our comique dons the motley of Sganarelle, and, bottle in hand, good-humouredly repays himself and others for the splenetic gravity of the previous *rôle*. The farcical drolleries of the Doctor, in spite of himself and the brooding sorrows of the Misanthrope, were in novel contrast, and applauding audiences were slow to tire of comedies so widely varying in their nature.

XII.

In the comedy of the Médecin Malgré Lui we have again the doting father driven to distraction by an only daughter, who here also adopts the malady-device in order to defeat the design of marrying her to one she hates and so secure the one she loves.

The matrimonial obstacle feigned is dumbness. The skill and science of the doctors of the Faculty proving useless, as in such cases they must ever do, Geronte, the father, despatches messengers in search of one of those practitioners who are credited with the gift of working marvellous cures where others fail. In the search chance throws them in the way of a certain Martine, wife of a fagoter named Sganarelle, and who, still smarting from the effects of a conjugal lesson with the rod the worthless fellow had given her, is sighing for the means of paying him back in his own coin. Questioned as to the whereabouts of the famous operator, the vixen sees her opportunity, and pointing out her culpable spouse cutting wood close by, she tells them that he is the very man they want, but assures them he will never own his skill or that he is a doctor unless by stoutly cudgelling him he is forced to it.

Stick in hand, the messengers hasten to secure their prize. To their civil enquiries as to who and what he is, Sganarelle fancying them bent on business, admits that he is the first man in the world at making fagots, but that nothing will induce him to sell them at less

than ten *sous* the hundred. "For," says he, "there are fagots and fagots, you know." The messengers, losing patience at this apparent prevarication and denial, order him to cease talking and confess his true estate and calling, and meeting with nothing but obstinate evasions, they immediately proceed to enforce Martine's prescription. A few applications of the sticks effect the purpose, and Sganarelle surrendering, exclaims, "Well, gentlemen, since you will have it so, I am a doctor and an apothecary into the bargain. I'd consent to being anything rather than be thrashed to death."

The law of necessity complied with, and the costumery preparations undergone, the fagoter accompanies the messengers to the house of their master. There he is introduced to Geronte, and, learning that his daughter is afflicted with loss of speech, with a professional air, to which his doctoral make-up lends full effect, Sganarelle at once diagnoses the case as one of dumbness. Being told that the suitor whom the father had chosen for her husband is impatiently awaiting the operation of a cure to claim her as his bride, he gravely queries, "Who can the fool be who does not wish his wife to be dumb? Would to heaven," says he, "that mine were so afflicted; *I'd* take good care that no one should try to cure her!" Then, ascertaining that Geronte is as ignorant about disease as he is himself, in the capacity of the learned doctor he forthwith makes great parade of medical science, discoursing in an incoherent jargon, when the brain, liver, heart, and lungs become inextricably

jumbled. This last fact, and certain eccentricities of manner, does not escape Geronte, but the audacious Sganarelle, by marvellous gift of speech, succeeds in so strongly impressing him and all concerned with his scientific importance that he finds himself in full possession of the case.

Leandre, who has been denied access to his lady love, now bethinks himself of strategy; he bribes Sganarelle to employ him as his apothecary, hoping in that craft-disguise to secure an interview. The proceeding is not without its risks, seeing he knows nothing of medical phraseology, but Sganarelle assures him that the dress is quite sufficient, that he himself is not a doctor, and knows nothing about the business. Leandre satisfied of this, the rest is soon told. He is admitted to the presence of Lucinde, and a perfect cure is wrought. The young deceiver, who, until her lover is introduced, was unable to articulate a syllable, has her tongue let loose, and declares she will marry him and no one else; and with such a volubility of words that Geronte in despair appeals to Sganarelle to make her dumb again; but this is now unnecessary, for at the very crisis and when an elopement of the lovers is reported to Geronte, and Sganarelle is threatened with summary justice for conniving at it, a letter for Leandre arrives apprising him of the death of a rich uncle who has left him a fortune, Geronte naturally relents and consents to the union of the lovers.

The *dénouement* so happy for those most deeply interested is no less so for the fagoter, who congratu-

lates himself in getting so well out of the scrape. Martine, with wifely instincts, naturally shares his feeling, but reminds him that, seeing he is not to be hanged, it is her he has to thank for being a doctor. "Yes," says Sganarelle, "it is you who brought on me the cudgelling, but I forgive you the assault, in favour of the dignity you raised me to; but beware for the future, and have great respect for a man of my consequence, and always remember that the resentment of a doctor is much more to be feared than people think."

This comic trifle is more amusing than severe. It may not have been the author's intention to ridicule the medical profession, still we cannot fail to recognize allusions here and there in every scene sufficiently significant. In short, he clearly shows he does not mean to spare them. The satire, however, is not direct. Sganarelle is a boorish peasant, who had been taught his letters, a reminiscence he feels proud of, and turns to good account when the train of circumstances described compels him to assume the dignified position of a doctor. Throughout the piece he merely occupies himself with mimicking the manners of the genuine practitioner; the consultations introduced are, consequently, but a humorous and lively parody of what takes place on such occasions. In fine, it may justly be said that of all Molière's pieces recognized as farces, this is unquestionably the one that best deserves the name; every incident is subordinated to the object of exciting laughter, which is the genuine characteristic of his provincial efforts. It is, in fact, the FAGOTEUX revived,

in which the hero Sganarelle had also been induced to assume the doctoral robe by some unworthy means, and accompanied with the coarse burlesque of the MÉDECIN AMBULANT. The adaptation, however, in spite of all its crude complexion, exhibits art of no mean order. Many passages are obviously studied. Molière, ready to seize on anything that merits ridicule in the profession, makes here good use of opportunity, and amusingly exposes the *ruse* of obtaining fees in advance, with other little foibles equally unworthy of a learned body who laid special claims to the unmercenary. And here, again, we have a fine critique on the practice of bleeding and purgation, as precautionary measures, for the malady to come, as Sganarelle expresses it; then there is the *chapeau étiquette,* the fagoter, tricked out in the high-crowned hat and robe of the medical graduate of the period, begs Geronte, who salutes him with much ceremony, "to keep his head covered, as Hippocrates enjoins in his chapter on hats." But things are not equal, and lead to another piece of foolery. Geronte knows nothing of the high authority, and knowing he is not a doctor, hesitates to violate politeness, but Sganarelle facetiously confers the licence creating him one by the application of the stick as he has himself been served, which by-play is but a reminiscence of the sword-stroke of knighthood, and the fisticuffing at the collegiate capping of the fresh alumnus.

But the audacious triumph of mimicry only increases as the Sganarelle goes more thoroughly into the *métier* he has perforce usurped. The examina-

tion of the patient is a small matter. The name of Aristotle, who, he modestly admits, is "a cubit greater than himself," exercises him; and when asked to pronounce on the nature of the case, he starts off in a vein of pathological disquisition replete with fallacies and fictions not unworthy of the legitimate practitioner, though infinitely more ridiculous. In his opinion, "the impediment in the patient's tongue is caused by certain humours which among us learned men we call peccant humours—peccant humours—inasmuch as the vapours formed by the exhalations of the influences which arise in the very regions of disease, coming, as we may say"—here having gone as far as the vulgar tongue will carry him, and finding that Geronte knows no more of the learned one than he does himself, he launches forth a galimatias of Latin words from the juvenile vocabulary in evidence of this view. He then vernacularly resumes:—"Thus these vapours which I speak of as passing from the left side where the liver is, to the right side where we find the heart, it so happens that the lungs, which in Latin we call *armyan*, having communication with the brain, which in the Greek we call *nasmus*, by by means of the *vena cava*, which in Hebrew is termed *cubile*, meet in their course the said vapours that fill the ventricle of the omoplat, and because the said vapours are endowed with a certain malignity which is caused by the acridity of the humours engendered in the concavity of the diaphragm, the aforesaid vapours—together with their Latin factors—is the reason why your daughter is dumb!"

As the question is one that lies within the range of professional competence alone, and Geronte being as little conscious as any other *bourgeois* of the prodigious strides that medicine is always making towards scientific perfection, the reasoned elucidation of the doctor seems highly admirable. But even this fact, when added to the parental worries and anxieties of the moment, does not altogether blind him to at least one anomaly in Sganarelle's notions of elementary anatomy; and, with all due deference, he confesses to his inability to understand the respective position of the heart and liver. "It appears to me," he says, "you place them differently from what they are; that is, the heart is on the left side and the liver on the right." This thrust is difficult to parry, but Sganarelle, keeping true to his models, is not easily abashed; he gravely replies that this "was so formerly, but that we have changed all that, and we now practise the art of medicine on an entirely new system." The *bourgeois* asks forgiveness for his ignorance, which the fagoter magnanimously extends.

The drollery, perhaps, reaches its highest pitch in the scene where Leandre affects the disguise of the apothecary. Wishing to complete the deception by mastering a few big medical terms to ornament his discourse, and give him the air of a learned man, Sganarelle assures him that the dress is quite sufficient, the fact being that he knows no more about medicine and learning than he does. Leandre, taken by surprise at this, refuses to believe it, but Sganarelle protests, "The devil take me if I do! for," continues he,

"they have made me a doctor in spite of my teeth. I never pretended to be so learned; all my studies never went beyond the lowest class at school, and I don't know how the idea beset them, but when I saw that they would have it that I *was* the learned doctor, I made up my mind to be so at other people's expense; and you would hardly believe how the mistake has spread about, and how every one persists in thinking me a marvel of science. I am run after on all hands, and if matters go on as they are I've a good mind to remain a doctor all my days. It is the very best of trades; for whether you do right or wrong you are paid all the same. The blame of doing bad work never falls on your own shoulders, and we cut as we like into the stuff that is given us to work on. If a shoemaker, in making his shoes, spoils a piece of leather, he has to pay for the price of it; but here you may spoil a man and it doesn't cost you a farthing. The blunders are never of our doing and the fault is always the patient's, if he dies. Lastly, the great advantage of the medical profession is that the dead are the most discreet and honest people possible to deal with in the world. They are never heard to complain of the doctor who sends them out of it."

As true satire can scarcely go further, additional quotations seem unnecessary, but the consultation scene which immediately follows contains some passages it would be almost unpardonable to overlook: as when Geronte is told that Lucinde, the patient, who is present, feels disposed to walk about a little, Sganarelle remarks that that will do her good, and

bids the young apothecary keep her company and feel her pulse while he discusses her disease; and taking Geronte aside so as to divert his attention, he begins by remarking that "It is a grave and subtle question among doctors whether women are more difficult to cure than men. Some say no, others say yes. I say yes and no! inasmuch as the incongruity of the opaque humours encountering the natural temperament of women, the animal parts dominate the sensitive, and show that the variability of their opinions depend on the oblique movement of the moon, and as the sun sheds his rays on the earth's concavity"— Here the diatribe is interrupted by Lucinde audibly assuring her lover that her sentiment towards him is unchanged, and Geronte, who hears her voice, expresses his surprise and gratitude at the marvellous recovery which science has effected. The happy illusion is only momentary, the intended elopement is discovered, and Sganarelle's complicity exposed, making matters worse than they were before; but the scene again changes, and the opportune arrival of the letter for Leandre finally sets things right.

XIII.

We have now reached the most active part of Molière's career. The doctors for a time are allowed a respite, and comedies on other subjects follow in rapid succession. In the following year, 1667, Tartuffe was again put upon the stage, but the attempt proved most unfortunate. The day after the performance—the only one—by order of the first president, its repetition was forbidden, and to add to the injustice the Archbishop of Paris threatened with excommunication all who dared to witness the entertainment. For a time the theatre was closed. During the interval the state of public feeling on the subject showed itself in publications, in prose and verse, of the keenest partizan intensity. While the production seemed to some the invention of Satan, it was for others a work of piety. For example, Saint-Evremond, writing from his English exile, could not understand how authority could persist in suppressing such a work, and adds, "If I ever submit to the Church, it will be to l'Imposteur that I owe my salvation. Devotion seems so reasonable coming from the lips of Cléante, that he would almost induce me to renounce my philosophy, and so well are false bigots painted, that their very portraits ought to shame them into laying aside their hypocrisy. How great is the good that sound piety does in this world!"

In the following year Molière selected afresh the

subject which he never touches without rising to the tragic level — the Amphitryon absorbs his efforts. Reserving for himself the *rôle* of Sosie, it is curious to note that that of Alcmène falls to Armande's lot, and at the very time when there was a two-year-old child between them whose paternity Molière refused to own. From this and other matters already referred to, it is easy to understand why the poet, now in the zenith of his greatness, and on the very eve of seeing his enemies confounded, could give utterance in his part to sentiments such as these—

> "Ah! qu'on est peu touché de louange, d'honneur,
> Et de tout ce que donne une grande victoire,
> Lorsque, dans l'ame, on souffre une vive douleur.
> Et que l'on donnerait volontiers cette gloire
> Pour avoir le repos du cœur."

But the treatment of this sentiment he pitches low as well as high, exposing it in every phase. Shortly afterwards he gives vent to it in another piece, which, though sufficiently ludicrous, is no less painfully emphatic. This was Le Mari Confondu, in which he played the part of the unfortunate husband, Georges Dandin, himself. In the beginning of the comedy, the *Valets de Fête* oblige him to dance with them, but Georges, ill-satisfied with his marriage, and having his mind occupied with appropriate reflections, goes through the business with a visage of such gruesome misery and distraction as to convulse the audience. But how suggestively the comique's own position was here portrayed—he, in spite of his similar chagrin, was obliged to dance in ballets and organise fêtes for

the pleasure of his Majesty. We experience more of tragedy than of comedy, when we remember that the performance wound up with these words from the lips of the hero :—"Ah ! I do not see what remedy can avail me. When one marries a wicked woman, as I have done, the best thing to do is to throw oneself into the water head first." It may be said that it was Georges Dandin and his wife Angelique that this concerned, but we must not forget that it was Molière and Armande who played their parts—a fact which must have had its inconveniences.

To add to the fever of the poet's life his genius still went on producing. In 1668 The Avare saw the light and brought its author much encouragement. Some days after the first performance of this piece the Prince de Condé, by way of gratifying his friend, and flouting his opponents, invited him to give a private representation of the proscribed Tartuffe at Chantilly. This daring, but happy venture, proved highly satisfactory to the influential few who witnessed it; and the verdict known, some few months afterwards by Royal favour all prohibition was withdrawn, much to the delight of the city playgoers. The negotiations which brought about the result, which the comique had so much at heart, it is important for us to remark, betrays that other infatuation which scarcely less preoccupied his mind, that was, his dealings with the doctors. We have seen how pointed were his allusions to them in the preface to the first edition of Tartuffe;

his reference to the matter in the *Placet* to the third edition was still more remarkable, consisting as it does of a communication, private and confidential, to his Majesty, couched in the following terms:—

"SIRE,—

"A very worthy physician, whose patient I have the honour to be, promises me, and will bind himself before the notary to make me live for thirty years to come, if I can obtain for him a favour from your Majesty. I have told him that I would not so far tax his capability, and would willingly feel satisfied, provided he would engage himself not to kill me. This favour, Sire, is a canonry of your Chapel Royal of Vincennes, now vacant by the death of * * *.

"Dare I further request this favour of your Majesty of the same day as the grand resuscitation of Tartuffe, resuscitated by your goodness? By the first favour I am reconciled with the devotees, and through the second I shall be reconciled with the doctors. This may be for me too many favours to ask at once; but perhaps it is not too many for your Majesty to grant, and I await with some respectful hope the response to my petition."

In the toleration and marvellous success of the Hypocrite the poet's crowning triumph was achieved, and medicine and the doctors again occupied him, and when under psychological conditions, as we may feel assured, the best calculated to excite the keenest

satire. But it was at this time not alone a question of psychology—a state of bodily illness was also in question. Clearly physical fatigue and suffering were telling on the comedian. The excitement of performing every day to crowded houses, the necessity of elaborating fresh inventions for his company, and last, not least, his matrimonial dissensions, could not fail to seriously affect his general health, never naturally strong. His wasted, pale and miserable mien, which admirers found so piquant on the stage, now gave reason for serious uneasiness to his friends, and became, strange to say, a source of cruel satisfaction to his enemies, as we shall see later on. The comedy of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac was now taken in hand, and judging from those physical peculiarities mentioned, the *rôle* of the hapless Limousin, which Molière played so admirably, he had specially devised to suit them. The doctors had only to look at him to feel convinced that he was the subject of "hypochondriacal melancholy" according to authority. "For an incontestable diagnostic proof," they will say, "you have only to consider the great look of sorrow and sadness, accompanied with apprehensive fears; the expression of the red and haggard eyes; that long beard; that thin and shrivelled habit, dusky complexion," and the rest.

The stage-doctors of the Faculty would, no doubt, be liable to exaggerate the poet's pathological condition, but they were of Molière's own creation, and he himself became the patient. Thus no one has any reason to complain, and certainly the world will never

fail to be amusingly satisfied; the comical doctors will always continue to convulse audiences with laughter, for never before nor since has invention in the way of medical mimicry been carried to such a pitch. But, notwithstanding the audacious drollery and absurdity of the piece, Diderot was right in his remark, "If people imagine that there are more men capable of writing Monsieur de Pourceaugnac than the Misanthrope they are mistaken."

Whatever place Monsieur de Pourceaugnac occupies in this play, the mastery of the precious character does not constitute the whole work. It does not suffice to have brought the provincial notable from Limoge to the capital to be presented to the King, get married, and show himself in high society; there are several currents of incident which form, as it were, one comedy within another. The stage-fashion offered a wide range of vigorous tableaux of antiquated scenes; the various inventions, Italian, Spanish and native, comedy or narrative, were before our poet for selection; but this applies to the non-medical elements; those medical which concern us in consequence of the scientific demonstrations whih which he flavours them, are novel and peculiarly his own.

The theme is again one of filial rebelliousness to paternal authority in affairs of the heart—of love. The whole action of this amusing *comedie - ballet* consists in the devices employed by Julia and her lover Eraste, aided by their confidants, who are briefly described in the list of characters as intriguers,

with the object of defeating the intention of Julia's father, Oronte, of marrying her to Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, whose arrival is hourly expected, but whose chances of success are very small, as we learn from Narine, the attendant's, address to the young lady: "Can your father be serious to speak of forcing you to marry this Limoge barrister—this Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, whom he has never seen in his life, and who is coming to carry you off from under our very noses? Should three or four thousand crowns ever suffice to make him reject a lover who is to your liking? And is a young lady like you to be thrown away on a Limousin? If the man wants to marry, why does he not choose a Limoge lady, and leave Christians alone? We will play him so many pranks, play such tricks upon him, that we will soon send him back to Limoge."

The tricks which are accordingly practised on the poor notable are various; the most extravagant of all consisting in delivering him as a lunatic into the hands of two doctors of the Faculty for treatment; and the consideration that he is likely to receive at their hands may be guessed from the character of the first physician in his case. "He is a man who knows his profession thoroughly, as I know my creed, and who, were his parents to die for it, would not depart one iota from the rules prescribed of old; yes, he always follows the high road, and never goes out of his way in search of novelties. For all the money in the world he would not cure a patient with other remedies than those prescribed by the Faculty. . .

He is not one of those doctors who prolong the patient's complaint; he is an expeditious practitioner, one who dispatches his cases, and if you are to die he is just the man to help you to do it quickly."

Such is the practitioner to whose care M. de Pourceaugnac is confided, and under the circumstances the torments he is subjected to are manifold. These, however, with some additional troubles, *non*-medical, at last attain the desired object, and the Limousin, having been disposed of and sent home again about his business, Oronte is cajoled into consenting to the marriage of his daughter with the object of her choice.

From the careful treatment of the medical *rôles* in this piece, we are enabled to judge of its tone and spirit, which differs widely from that of the previous one. The poet carries to extremes his usual or favourite method, but goes deeper into the medical position, and in so doing, with a ruthless process of dissection, the pathological subtilties based on the marvellous physiological doctrines of the school are charmingly exposed. The two practitioners to whom the gentleman from Limoge is confided are masters in their art. The erudition they display in establishing the diagnosis is replete with every possible extravagance, and such as our modern humourists would use in order to explain things perfectly inexplicable. So it would seem to us; but when Molière wrote, the theories and language of antiquity in medical matters were far too seriously received to answer all his comic purposes; he therefore adds to them the popular superstitions of the age, such

as the influence of numbers, symbolism, and the like. The pedants quote authority correctly, but they make choice of their extreme views. Their prescriptions and learned discourses are consistent with the rules, but then, unfortunately, M. de Pourceaugnac is not suffering from the malady they find the symptoms indicate—in fact, he is not ill at all, and it is in this the great charm of the comedy consists. Though the doctors are neither fools nor charlatans, their conclusions are erroneous; still their errors are the strongest proofs of their capacity; their scientific fallacies lead them to detect disease where none exists, and to insist on operating on the patient in spite of all his honest protests to the contrary. Their learned infatuation in their art, and all its forms, even to the famous *dixi*, which is an echo of the school, are in Molière's happiest vein.

How inimitable is the consultation, with the imaginary patient seated between the two black-robed doctors. They have deprived him of his sword, and keep him under strictest surveillance. Seated in his chair, every movement is resisted; they seize him by the shoulders when he attempts to rise; he spits with irritation at the cross-questioning of his medical inquisitors, but all in vain. He is in scientific hands, and there is truly something subcutaneous in the conscientious treatment and examination of the gentlemanly provincial dupe. But to realize the comicality of a situation in which the genuine and fictitious are so marvellously combined, the comedy must be before us. Any attempt at comment or

analysis would fail to do it justice. The stage actuality is inimitable in its drollery, for the contents and excursions of the dialogue, whilst serving to excess such purpose, goes far beyond it, exhibiting, in fact, the candid, learned, and scientific side of the high-class legitimate physician of the seventeenth century.

In the celebrated eleventh scene of the first act the patient, who expects to be hospitably entertained, finds himself confronted with the two doctors in the position of senior and junior consultants, shadowed by an apothecary. According to rule, the junior leads off, and the proceedings throughout are otherwise conducted in strict accordance with the forms.

FIRST PHYSICIAN: "I say, then, sir, with your leave, that our patient here present is, unfortunately, affected by that kind of madness very troublesome, and which requires nothing less than an Æsculapius like yourself, consummate in our art; you, I say, who have grown old in harness, as they say, and through whose hands so many of all sorts have passed. I call it hypochondriacal melancholy to distinguish it from the two others; for the celebrated Galen has, as he always does, learnedly established three kinds of this disease, which we call melancholy, so named not only by the Latins, but also by the Greeks, which is to be well observed in our case—the first, which emanates from the really bad state of the brain; the second, which proceeds entirely from the blood, made and become atrabilious; the third, hypochondriacal, which is ours, and which is caused by some defect of some part of

the lower abdomen and of the lower region, but particularly of the spleen, the heat and inflammation of which drives to the brain of our patient a great deal of fuliginous, thick, and gross matter, the black and malignant vapour of which causes deprivation of the functions of the principal faculty, and produces the complaints by which, according to our arguments, he is manifestly attacked and proved to suffer from. All this taken for granted, since a disease well defined is half cured—for *ignoti nulla est curatio morbi*—it will not be difficult to determine the remedies which we must give to this gentlemen. Firstly, to cure this obdurate plethora, and this luxuriant cacochymy throughout the body, I am of opinion that he should be liberally phlebotomised; that is to say, that he should be bled frequently and copiously—in the first place at the basilic vein, then at the cephalic vein, and even, if the disease be obstinate, that the vein in the forehead should be opened, and that the opening should be large, that the thick blood may pass out; and at the same time that he should be purged, deobstructed, and evacuated by proper and suitable purgatives—that means, by chologogues, melangogues, et cetera, and, as the real source of all the evil is a gross or feculent humour, or else a black and thick vapour, which obscures, infects, and contaminates the animal spirits, it is proper that he should afterwards take a bath of soft and clean water, with plenty of whey; to purify, by the water, the feculence of the gross humours, and to clear by the milk the blackness of this vapour."

If read carefully, the foregoing specimen of medical mimicry leaves room for comparative study, which one is almost tempted to indulge in. Contrasted with what was prevalent in real life, we feel convinced of the special pleasure the poet had in thus dealing with the subject. In the matter of the diagnosis, for example, given by the first physician as junior consultant, we are forced to ask ourselves how much need be attributed to Molière's own imagination; the demonstration and classification of M. de Pourceaugnac's presumed insanity, when contrasted with similar disquisitions recorded by practitioners such as Vallot or d'Aquin, makes it difficult to decide which is the more amusing, the records of the Faculty or of the Farce. The above-named learned celebrities were practising when the poet was performing, and referring to the pages of the *Journal de la Santé*, a passage may be noted relating to the indisposition of the royal patient, of which the following is an extract, and shows that to award the claim of highest comicality is no easy matter in the cases submitted:—

"The king is subject to vapours—vapours which proceed from the spleen and the melancholic humour whose livery they wear, in the chagrin they impart and the desire for solitude which they engender. They permeate by the arteries to the heart and to the lungs, where they excite palpitations, disquietudes, lassitudes and dyspnœa; from thence proceeding upwards they even reach the brain, and there by disturbing the spirits of the optic nerves they set up vertigo and swimming of the head, and colliding

elsewhere with the nervous principle, cause weakness of the limbs to such a degree that support is necessary in walking, a circumstance very troublesome to any one, but more particularly the king, who has need of all the head he has in the discharge of the affairs of State. His temperament tending much to melancholy, his sedentary mode of life, his presiding much in councils, his natural voracity, which causes him to eat too much, greatly promote this malady by reason of the excessive and inveterate obstructions the crudities excite in the veins, which retaining the melancholic humour prevent its escaping by the natural passages; and so by their retention give rise to heat, fermentation, and tempestuousness; thus there is no reason for surprise that blood-letting so powerfully awakens the disorder, seeing that it is so certain that by the movement that it excites in the entire volume of the blood, and throughout the veins, it agitates the melancholic humour in its very sources, without evacuating it aggravates its ebullition and evaporation."

If pathologizing and diagnosing was the business of the doctors the remedial measures and their enforcement was what concerned the patients. In such emergencies the victims of the stage had decidedly the advantage over those of the Court; the *right divine* ceases where medicine begins, and the king himself had humbly to submit where the meanest subject might reasonably rebel, and this course Monsieur de Pourceaugnac adopts.

The medical ballet interlude, instead of reconciling

him to his tormentors and their measures, only aggravates the spirit of resistance; even the forcible assaults of the doctors, apothecaries, and their myrmidons fail to bring him under subjection, and it is only after undergoing a protracted stage-hunt that the poor fellow succeeds in making his escape. The doctors being baulked of their patient and their fees, as is natural to imagine, develope another phase of professional feeling and infatuation, which is all delightfully brought out in the second act, scene first, where the intriguer Sbrigani interviews the principal physician. For the thorough appreciation of its comicality we refer the reader to the Comedy itself.

XIV.

MOLIÈRE is seldom known to have addressed the public in his own name save in a few short prefaces or *placets* to his plays. It is always to his imaginary personages he gives place, and in that way alone shows his hand to the public. For this reason, perhaps, more may be gleaned or guessed at of his private thoughts, so desirable to be discovered, yet so difficult to reach, by turning to his friends or the society he cultivated. If we follow the intellectual and artistic relations at this stage something may be learned, particularly of the working of the poet's mind as regards that aspect of his artistic genius that we are especially investigating.

It was late in 1669, as we have seen, that the comedy of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac was brought out. In the same year appeared La Fontaine's *Roman* —the Amours de Psyché—and which was so much admired and spoken of at the time. Those who have read the work know that in the opening of that production Molière, under the assumed name of Ariste, is introduced as sauntering and conversing with his friends in the Gardens of Versailles, one of whom was La Fontaine himself, designated as Polyphile. At this time La Fontaine tells us that the comique and his friends formed a kind of *société*, or what, says he, might have been called an academy, had the members been more numerous. But from the first there was this difference from academic actuality, namely, the exclusion of anything like formal conversation. Finding themselves together, and their work in hand discussed, should any subject connected with general science or the *belles-lettres* suggest itself, it would be entertained, but would not be dwelt upon long; they would pass on *de propos en autres*, as bees from flower to flower, by preference in the classic fields of literature, though the modern fields were not disdained.

The comique saw other *coteries* or friends than those he was connected with in the Court circles at Versailles, but at the time referred to by La Fontaine, the adaptation of his *Psyché* for the stage would be on hand—a work in which Corneille, Quinault, and Lulli, each in his particular walk, actively collaborated with our poet—this *grand spectacle à féeries*, now finds a place in his collected works. The composition, teeming as

it does with heathen divinities and other Olympian associations, would naturally draw largely on the poet's acquaintance with antiquity. A classic, like all the poets, he would at this time have assiduously courted an acquaintance with the ancients, but now we find him declaring that it is no longer necessary to learn of Plautus or of Terence, or to draw on the fragments of Menandre—"*Je n'ai plus qu'à étudier la nature,*" says he. It is not to be believed, however, that, notwithstanding his powers of close observation, he neglected to profit by the reading and efforts of others who had gone before him. He read incessantly the Latin poets as well as the old French, Italian, and Spanish dramatists—"*point de bouquin,*" says a contemporary, "*qui peut se sauver de ses mains;*" nothing was indifferent to him that concerned the grand art he so loved. Even Polichinelle, Arlequin, Tabarin, and Scaramouche often had him as a spectator at their crowded tressel-stage, and sometimes he would submit to be reminded by the censorious La Fontaine of his liability to mingle Terence with Tabarin.

Thus consorting with the learned and men of letters of the day, Molière was himself a lover of the classics and strong in his scholarship. He found a kindred predilection in the writers of antiquity. Need we ask what authors charmed him most? The question scarcely requires an answer. They were especially the poets and satirists who initiate us into the secrets of domestic life or expose the infirmities and frailties, physical and moral, common to all mankind. The most ancient are the best, as they show less reticence

in picturing reality, an art in which Plautus and Terence stand masters *par excellence.*

Amongst the popular and professional delusions of the age, medicine finds a prominent place in almost every writer of this class. A critical glance shows them to furnish literary curiosities of the rarest kind. This fact is worthy the attention of the student, for however much it may surprise even the well-read of our times, it is to be suspected that all the poets, satirists and comedians France possesses would not offer such a field of study in this subject as would the Roman poets of the Republic. Of this number Plautus ranks the first. He seems to have lived and moved in medical society. Who can fail to be struck with the originality of his observations in everything relating to it? Unless he had seen practitioners at work, read their books, and listened to their discourses, his delineations, expressions, and allusions could not have attained their admirable fitness. A simple study of the Greek poets who preceded him will hardly account for the characteristic colouring and spirit of his scenes and personages. It is true he follows the Grecian stage, and borrows from it types of character and detail; but although in his plays the personages bear Greek names and wear Greek costume, they still act and speak like Roman citizens, and represent the familiar phases of Roman life, so that, strictly speaking, they are only *fabulæ palliatæ* to the eye. The relations which exist between the comic satirist and the audience are sympathetic, as he holds the mirror up to nature and reflects the society of the Imperial Capital.

It is not, however, the costumes or *mise en scène* of Plautus that Molière draws upon for his dramatic material in the medical comedies. The effects which he shows are more direct. His doctors wear the cap, rabat, and the robe which distinguishes the medical contemporaries, and certainly they wore no mask, as the worthy Dean Guy Patin triumphantly asserts they did in writing to a *confrère* that "the comedian and his players had caricatured the Court physicians at Versailles." The error that the Dean commits is natural enough. It is not to be supposed he ever witnessed a theatrical performance, and being more familiar with the classic stage than that of Molière or Corneille, such an essential property would be hardly likely to escape the notions he would form of what took place on the occasion. Boileau, happy in the fabrication of Greek synonyms for the medical heroes of the piece referred to, though a genuine echo, is exceptional. What Molière found in Plautus was the mastery of presenting certain human types; the Roman also had the same pleasure in exhibiting, and the same exquisite command of inoffensive ridicule to which the healing art and its professors lie so exposed. He knew right well their ignorance, pretensions, and impostures, their jealousies, rivalries, and factions. The schools of Rome and Athens are his rival Faculties of Montpellier and Paris; he has his doctors, provincial and metropolitan practitioners; knows something of diseases and their treatment, surgery and its applications, and jests about the science and its votaries with all the force of an initiated votary. From the Roman

censor there was truly much to learn. Our comedian consequently finds in him an endless source of inspiration, style, plot, and dialogue, difficult for any save himself to equal or surpass. If Boileau accuses him of linking Tabarin with Terence the charge is ill-sustained where Plautus is the model; in the comedies where medicine and the doctors are the theme, the affinities are natural and find their proper place.

But this does not exhaust the riches of the French comedian's ancient predecessor. Besides the delicate question of fees, he exposes the marvellous faith in physic, the *naive* methods of forming diagnoses, and the consultation twaddle which for comic drollery would read side by side with that of M. Pourceaugnac or L'Amour Médecin. In the Manæchemes, whose plot so much resembles that of the Amphitryon, and still more lively and sustained, there is a specimen of the kind where the doctors show to a disadvantage really Molièresque, and where we may well imagine many a *confrère* of antiquity revelling in extensive practice, self-confidence, and routine in the questioning of his patient, might readily have read a portrait so personal. And why not? There were professional absurdities and weaknesses in Rome as well as in Paris, which comedy might justly claim a right to deal with. For art it is legitimate, and not without a moral value. In every age the doctors have been the victims of the wits and humourists. Nor have they any reason to regret it, they never found themselves the worse for it. Nor have their patients fared the better. Great latitude must be allowed to comedy,

even when it threatens to overstep reality; professional fallacies and foibles that meet with ridicule have generally an actual existence, and if in the Manæchemes, the Charangon, the Rudens, and the Mercator of Plautus, the satire is severe, it ought to be remembered that it applies to Rome two thousand years ago, and at a period when science, morals and manners, were not less open to correction than those that prevailed when Molière began to entertain the public.

XV.

It is always easy to explain exceptional gifts by a miracle of genius. In Molière's day it was easy to attribute them to the mother source—antiquity. When the French comic poet's name was associated with those of Aristophanes, Plautus or Terence, it was thought that all was said that could be said about the matter, but as Molière seldom exhibits greater powers than when he takes what was in that day called science or philosophy for his theme, it is hard to see how this applies. In dealing with these subjects he seldom rests satisfied with words or phrases; he sees his way clearly because, as Panurge says, he never mistakes *des vessies pour des lanterns*, and thus shows how marvellously he was imbued with the modern spirit. That this was so has been already indicated, but some further particulars respecting the poet's associates at this stage may be added—particulars

which have almost escaped his commentators, although they had only to look to the surroundings of Molière, to find them.

Molière's reputation as an enemy of the Faculty was now fully established; but it must be observed that while ridiculing the ignorance and pretensions of the fraternity, he knew well how to defend the principles upon which medical science should be based, namely, natural science. He ridiculed *médecine* and *les médecins*, and he was right in doing so, but in his attacks it should not be forgotten that he was the true friend of medical reform. The *Messieurs* Purgon, Fleurante, and Diafoirus might naturally turn with indignation from his exhibitions, when thinkers like Lamothe le Vayer, Rohault, or Bernier might as naturally remain to applaud, and no doubt did so. Whether Cartesian or Gassendian mattered little, such minds are not to be judged by the school they represent. Systems in the history of philosophy are precisely the most perishable constituents; tendency is what should be considered—that which characterises the intellectual movement of an epoch and what it definitely adds to knowledge—that class of thought, in fact, which Molière and his friends belonged to or cultivated.

Of the three philosophic contemporaries just mentioned, Lamothe le Vayer and Jacques Rohault have had, perhaps, too little credit given them for their influence on Molière. Being his intimate friends, and distinguished as thinkers and writers, a few remarks concerning them may be welcome as adding to our

knowledge of the poet's friendly social circle and the learned material it afforded.

As regards intellectual position, Lamothe le Vayer is somewhat difficult to place. Though apparently an inveterate Pyrrhonist, he had not altogether escaped the influence of Descartes, and retained much more of the old metaphysical method and conception than Rohault or Bernier. Professionally a jurist—but jurist philosophically sceptical—his attention had not been directed much towards the natural sciences. This preparation having failed him, he held to pure rationalism in everything outside the faith, and though giving to the world his numerous perplexing lucubrations he, like the ecclesiastic Gassendi, retained to the last his high official position and a general esteem which, notwithstanding his many eccentricities, was really his due.

It was to this Lamothe le Vayer that Molière is known to have addressed the only letter of his that we now possess, and which was written on the occasion of the death of the savant's only son. The young man was a favourite of the poet. He often had him at Auteuil with Chapelle and those of his inner friendly circle. The painful circumstances of his young friend's death, while impressing the poet with pity for the parent, would not, as might naturally be supposed, improve his affection for the Faculty, as it would appear that it was at the hands of the doctors the young Lamothe had the misfortune to succumb. It is again Guy Patin taking note of everything that medically transpires—that supplies us with this fact.

"The doctors," says he, "having administered to *le Vayer fils* the antimonial wine three times running, have sent him to that country from whence no one ever returns." The fine sympathetic tone Molière's letter conveys is but an envelope to the celebrated sonnet of condolence his friend's bereavement prompted, and shows how closely intimate were the relations existing between the comic poet and leading grave and learned contemporaries. The two memorials, little known save to the Molière literary specialist, coming as they do in such close connection with the subject of our study, claim a place here, and we accord it to them without apology.

"You will easily perceive, Monsieur, that I am far from complying with the custom usually followed under such circumstances as this, for the sonnet which I enclose for you is meant to be a consolation. I have thought it my duty to act in this way towards you, believing that to justify your tears, and urge on you the right of indulging your grief, is the best way to console a philosopher.

"If the advice advanced may not appear of sufficient force to raise you above the severer lessons of philosophy, and enable you to weep without restraint, you must attribute it to the lack of eloquence in one who is unable to teach, a thing which he finds it so easy himself to practise."

> Aux larmes, le Vayer laisse tes yeux ouverts,
> Ton deuil est raisonable, encore qu'il soit extrême;
> Et lorsque pour toujours on perd ce que tu perd,
> La Sagesse, crois-moi, peut pleurer elle-même.

On se propose a tort cent préceptes divers
Pour pouvoir d'un œil sec voir mourir ce qu'on aime.
L'effort en est barbare aux yeux de l'univers,
Et c'est brutalité plus que vertue suprème.

On sait bien que les pleurs ne remeneront pas
Ce cher fils que t'enlève un imprévu trepas;
Mais la perte par là n'en est pas moins cruelle.

Ses vertus d'un chacun le faisaient révérer;
Il avait le cœur grand, l'esprit beau, l'âme belle,
Et ce sont des sujets à toujours le pleurer.

Of Lamothe no more need be said, but Rohault, that other friend, cannot be dismissed so briefly. His intimacy with the poet must have been of the closest kind, if all that the biographer Grimarest has to say about it be authentic. Like Chapelle, Rohault seems to have shared much of the poet's leisure time in his quiet retreat at Auteuil, and like Chapelle, was even made a confidant in matters relating to the comedian's heart and home. Grimarest shows the poet in his matrimonial perplexities unburthening his mind, and Rohault advancing all the maxims of a sound philosophy to convince him that he was wrong in giving way to his feelings as he did—attempts at solace naturally ineffectual, and to which the miserable victim could only reply, "How can a man act philosophically with a wife like mine? Perhaps if you, with all your wisdom, were in my place, you would act still more unreasonably."

But this was between friends; to the world Rohault's wisdom and celebrity lay in his teaching, as we find it embodied in his grand *Traité de Physique*. This remarkable work was dedicated to

Son Altesse Monseigneur de Guise, and in the usual vein of courtly flattery. But the writer was no ordinary dedicator, and if he sounded the praises of those virtues his exalted patron never possessed, he redeemed himself in the sincerity with which he exposed his philosophic views. After reminding Monseigneur "that his ancestors have defended the verities of the faith, they have also shed their blood in defence of the rights of the State," he further reminds him "it has remained for your Royal Highness to be the protector of the verities of nature." And getting beyond the preface we find him remarking that "the time is now favourable for certain things, the advance of which is always towards perfection by the destruction of what has gone before." Here we have some indication of the march of scientific thought and the decline of metaphysical delusions—indication which at every page becomes more and more apparent. "What," says he, "retards the development of physics"—which then meant knowledge of things natural—"is blind submission to the authority of the ancients, and the habit of regarding things too metaphysically." What he would substitute is inductive reasoning and experiment. He desires "that determination in matter should be investigated, so as to ascertain why a cause gives rise to one effect rather than another, so that we should no longer accustom ourselves to affirm that effects are the action of *qualities* or *faculties,*" for, as he adds, "every substantive is not a substance."

No one of Rohault's day, not even Malebranche, saw

more clearly through the folly of the fantastic explanations of simple natural phenomena, and he, more than any other, strengthened the hands of both the philosopher and the poet in ridiculing the scientific replies *à la mode* to questions indefinite and obscure, as for example—Why does the sun attract vapour? Why does quinine arrest intermittent fever? Why does rhubarb purge the bile and polychrestic salts the phlegm? To questions such as these the intervention of the *qualities*, primary or occult, supplied the definite explanation. The *attractive, expulsive* or *detersive qualities* were ready at hand, and as Malebranche charmingly expressed it, as applicable to the horse-drawn carriage as to the sun-raised vapours; to the cleansing of the clothes-brush as to the purgation by either of the medicaments named. As for Molière, his critique remains immortal. To the question—Why does opium cause sleep?

Cur opium facit dormire?

the medical candidate in the *Cerémonie* of the Malade Imaginaire is made to reply—

Quia est in eo
Virtus dormativa
Cujus est Naturæ
Sensus assopire.

To this the mock Faculty, like the genuine one, chimes *Benè, benè respondere.*

For Molière, as for Rohault, subtilties such as these are absurd enough. Stripped of their scientific verbiage, they become all the more so from the fact of their forming part of a system more general—a

system wherein the mind made light of observation, and while fancying it interpreted nature, it was only reading its own conceptions. Thus by a singular fallacy conceptions were realised and personified. Fresh novelties were added, and in their turn personified, till, passing from hypothesis to hypothesis, a *Château de cartes* system of science had been evolved, which it only required a breath of common sense and experiment to wreck. The rational current of renovation now setting in was actively disposing of it, and on all hands except in medicine, where it was still repelled.

How such a system operated in medicine we have seen admirably illustrated in the consultation of M. de Pourceaugnac. Given at length, we are enabled to trace the purely imaginary or hypothetical elements of the pathology and therapeutics of the seventeenth century. The writings of such men as Lamothe le Vayer and Rohault covered all the ground, and were, no doubt, familiar to Molière. Towards the close of Rohault's *Traité* he would find even the circulation of the blood very correctly set forth, and it is consequently not surprising that the comic poet should have dealt so freely with the new theory. Thanks to his friends he understood it, and was therefore only dependent on such knowledge as was attributable to common sense and mere experience for the direction of his judgment as to the pernicious tendency of the general practice. But as this leads to sources still more closely allied to medicine and its professors, it will be necessary to again refer to François Bernier.

The affections Bernier inspired were no doubt more due to his being a rationalising *savant* than a doctor, a fact which his close association with Gassendi will explain, for he was the editor of that sensible philosopher's works, a populariser of his views, and he performed the mission with both force and elegance. As an instance of the physician more by Degree than actual practice, he troubled himself little with a *clientèle* of patients, and was consequently free from the perplexities and prejudices of his confraternity. Occupying a high position in the estimation of contemporaries, for his charming manners and general knowledge, he was no less noted for his learning, and Saint Evremond alludes to him as the *jolie philosophe.*

It was these qualities and kindred artistic tastes which endeared him to the poet and the literary circles of his time, where he left his traces in that field entirely claimed for our *comique* in aiding Boileau in the composition of L'Arrêt Burlesque, a curious piece couched in the judicial language and rancorous controversial spirit of the epoch, and originating in the same ideas as those of the Malade Imaginaire. This piece was credited with the merit of thwarting a decree which the University of Paris endeavoured to obtain from Parliament against those who taught any other philosophy than that of Aristotle.

The following extracts may give some idea of it:—

"Seeing, that one known by the name of Reason, among other misdemeanours, has by a procedure *null and void,* attributed to the said heart the charge of receiving chyle, belonging hitherto to the liver, as

also making the blood to circulate throughout the body, with full power to the said blood to loiter, wander, and vagabondize with impunity in the veins and arteries, having no other right or title to commit such practices than is conveyed to it by simple experiment, and whereas the testimony of Reason has never been admitted in the said school:

"The Court decides that the chyle goes direct to the liver without passing by the heart, and that the liver receives it.

"It forbids the blood to linger, vagabondize, wander, or circulate in the body in such manner for the future under pain of being summarily given up and left to the mercy of the Faculty of Medicine.

"It also forbids Reason and her adherents for the future, to attempt to cure disease by unworthy measures and medicaments, such as have not received the sanction and approval of the Faculty. And in the case of such irregular cures by such measures and medicaments, it is permitted the doctors of the Faculty to impart—by ordinary methods—the fever to their patients, and then to restore them to their natural state of health, in order that they may be immediately afterwards medically treated according to the Rules — Rules which, when they fail to save the patient's life, at least conduct him to the other world well bled and clystized. And, in order that there may be no future contravention of the said Rules, Reason is hereby declared for ever banished from the schools of the said Faculty, and forbidden to enter them or in any way to annoy or disturb the said

Aristotle in the possession and enjoyment of the said schools under penalty of being declared Janséniate and a lover of novelties."

Such a philippic, worthy of Molière himself, was calculated to do more damage to the old doctrine, now on its decline, than volumes of reasoning.

From this passage of the joint production it is easy to perceive how much Bernier's sentiments were in sympathy with our poet's. But there was more than this. If his philosophic views were Epicurean and true to the model of Gassendi, his master, they were always moderate.

These notes, though brief and cursory, may afford the student some insight into the sources which the poet drew upon so freely for the philosophic and scientific elements of his work, more particularly those relating to medicine, and prove beyond a doubt that he was not only acquainted with the questions which engaged the attention of the learned of his time, but that he was indebted to his familiarity with them by direct association with the most intrepid investigators on the lines of what was then fast becoming science.

XVI.

FROM the rapid *résumé* of Molière's career thus far traced, it may be already gathered that he was a subject miserably constituted and keenly sensitive. No matter whether his idiosyncrasies and views with

reference to medicine had taken definite form or not, it is certain he submitted to its *régime*, and like others, complied with the counsels his medical advisers had to give. It is also more than probable that, like too many patients of his class, he was more familiar with remedial measures than he was willing to admit. However that may be, his position as a sufferer must have furnished ample opportunities of forming friendships with the best physicians of his time; those celebrated few who moved beyond the narrow circle of their calling, and found a pleasure in his writings and society. He does not appear to have known Gabriel Naudet, nor his epistolary friend, Guy Patin, but as we have already seen, for the scarcely less noted Bernier, his former fellow student, he had a strong attachment.

Socially and speculatively Molière was eclectic, and the Bernier intimacy was not without counterpoise. There was another of the medical fraternity who shared his confidence, and who, on the contrary, was a passionate Cartesian. This was one Nicholas Léonard, subsequently Dean of the Faculty. Though comparatively little is known of him, there is evidence to show that a certain unity of tastes and feelings brought them much together, and we may readily imagine that while amicable relations lasted, the comedian's love for philosophical discussion would be freely brought into play. In his leisure hours and ambrosial meetings with Léonard and Chapelle, the absorbing metaphysical and mechanical theories of Descartes would be a frequent topic of chit-chat.

Though Léonard, as Fauconneau-Dufresne informs us, saw much of him, and was even said to have assisted him in working up his medical comedies, the honour belongs with something more like certainty to another medical friend, still better known, and whose connection with the poet stamps his reputation as a practitioner. This was Mauvillain, his regular medical attendant, the personage alluded to in the well-known anecdote so characteristic of the patient, and frequently alluded to by biographers. While Molière was dining at Versailles on one occasion—a circumstance not rare—his state of health being spoken of, the King remarked to him, "You have your doctor; what does he do for you?" The comedian's reply was, "Sire, Mauvillain and I consult together; he prescribes for me, I never take his medicines, and get well." There might be some truth in the witticism. There is little doubt his doctor showed him much indulgence, and as sometimes happens with ourselves, his mental state would receive more attention than his bodily ailments. If the treatment was not altogether in accordance with the forms and ordinances of the Faculty, it was, perhaps, all the more efficacious. At all events, it is evident his professional services were well received, as their relationship gave rise to a display of gratitude only consistent with the highest confidence in the skill and judgment of his medical adviser. It was in favour of this Mauvillain's son that Molière wrote the remarkable petition to the King which we find in the Placet to the third edition of Tartuffe already given, the value of which document in connection with our

subject it is impossible to over-estimate. No reminiscence we possess exemplifies more fully the generous, genial nature of the man, and in the act we can almost read the inward satisfaction which he felt in making, through a friend, as it were, the *amende honorable* toward a learned body which he had much offended. The singular memorial, however, speaks volumes. The comedian applied to his Majesty for the vacant Canonry of his Chapel of Vincennes, and the favour was in effect obtained.

Is it not singular that the only instance known of Molière soliciting preferment from his Royal Master should be in the favour of a friend and in the interests of a member of the Faculty? Though done with such good grace from the happy tone of badinage made use of, any idea of conciliating the doctors seems to have been farthest from his thoughts. Still, we may be allowed to hope that the kindly office was not altogether looked at in the light of personal favour by the profession.

Relations so intimate and so long continued were not precisely those existing between a patient and his attendant, even supposing them the best assorted; the two were much more sympathetic. Even during Molière's lifetime Mauvillain received the credit of supplying him with medical material for his comedies. Nor was this indiscretion to his prejudice; though an innovator and a violent opponent of the Faculty's conservatism, he was subsequently elected Dean—an office which he filled with honour and distinction.

As the reader may desire to learn a little of Mauvil-

lain's life and character, we will here furnish some particulars worth noting, for besides being one of Molière's closest friends, his professional position and the important *rôle* he played in his connection with the Faculty gave him some distinction.

Jean-Armand de Mauvillain was the son of a celebrated surgeon, who had the charge of the library of the Cardinal de Richelieu. The favour of the father was extended to the son. The great Prime Minister was his sponsor, gave to him his Christian name Armand, and afterwards attended to his education. Destined for the medical profession, he studied for some time at Montpellier, and afterwards at Paris, where he received his license in 1648. In what was termed the discourse of the *paranymphe*, a ceremonial eulogy of the merits of the candidate, we have a summary of the many qualities the *protégé* of the Cardinal possessed—the baptismal fortune, which was a recommendation in itself, we may naturally suppose was not without value. As a specimen of academic eloquence, the discourse is well worth quoting. Besides being less absurd than such orations generally were, it supplies a few particulars of the personal habits and appearance not usually pertaining to the student, and shows Jean-Armand as a man *à la mode*. "Such has been from infancy the attention given to his education, such the care he always gives to his person, that far from having in his appearance anything austere or forbidding, it is by the charming candour of his character, by the elegance of his manners, and by an exquisite politeness, that he has

always endeavoured to conciliate the respect of worthy people. Mauvillain is so well brought up, so agreeable, so fascinating, that the Graces seem to dwell in him, one might even add that he had been fashioned by their hands. And notwithstanding, in seeing him so attentive to his toilette and the dressing of his hair, think not he indulges in anything but a legitimate pleasure; nothing in the world would move him to let effeminacy mar the manliness of his virtue. Julius Cæsar loved to boast of having soldiers, who, though well combed and perfumed, were none the less brave in combat. It is to be added that Mauvillain solves with a marvellous facility the questions proposed to him, and such are the charms of his elocution that, by virtue of it, it is not to the ears of his auditors his eloquence alone appeals, it goes straight to their heart."

How little the portrait, really graphic, and which is nothing less than pleasing, of this young student, spruce and elegant, reminds us of the Thomas Diafoirus of his class we know so well. If there are touches that are flattering, they are none the less a likeness both in person and character, as the liberty he allowed himself in the choice of subjects for the test examination fully testifies.

In the *Vespérie* discourse the thesis he defends is *An ridere sapientis?—ignori* he could demonstrate to plaudits of the assembly that gaiety was an attribute of wisdom. But the records of the Faculty enable us to look behind the scenes. In the discourse given on the occasion of his *paranymphe* exhibition, his sponsor, in alluding to his whilome studies at

Montpellier, significantly adds, "It was not, however, with that absurd idea which attracts so many there, that in passing some nights at a rival University, they might, one fine morning, wake up to find themselves a doctor. No, it was to convince himself and enable him to testify to the world that, no matter what advantages that school might offer, one has them all a hundred-fold at Paris; that the riches of that vaunted Faculty is poverty compared with it."

Loquacious chancellors had their license; still it may be permitted us to hold that Mauvillain's sojourn at Montpellier was not a thing so harmless, and may explain some curious details of his future conduct, foreign to the school and manners of the capital. Here, again, Guy Patin keeps us company. In recounting all that happened, he tells that in 1647 a *marchand d'orviétan* petitioned the Dean of the Faculty for the approval of his nostrum. Refused, he sought some other *ancients* not so scrupulous, who supplied him with the desired certificates, among them Guénaut, Des Fougerais and Mauvillain. Conniving at the use of drugs recommended by charlatans of the *Pont-Neuf* was a grave offence. But by a later application under a new Dean the criminal transaction was discovered, and the traitors to the Faculty denounced and solemnly expelled. This adventure was certainly not to the honour of Mauvillain, though there was this much in his favour: he was only *Bachelier*, and the antimonial controversy was at its height. The names with which Mauvillain was associated show the side he had already taken, and which may pro-

bably have hailed in the *orviétan* vendor a persecuted chemist. Be that as it may, after a term of humiliation and repentance, pardon was extended, though, as Guy Patin feels assured, the stain attached to him would still remain.

But Mauvillain could not long deny his leaning. In the following year he is one of the most active of the antimonial party, and constantly in collision with the bleeders who defended the good old cause. His *fracas* with the redoubtable Blondel will show to what extremes the medical enmity was carried. In 1628, when the latter was elevated to the Deanship by a large majority, Mauvillain made himself distinguished by an opposition which was but the prelude to differences much more serious with the querulous old *chef d'école,* and which he himself placed on record. The circumstance admirably shows the spirit and formalities of the Faculty then in force.

It was on the occasion of the examination which was called the *quodlibetaire,* when a numerous assemblage crowded the benches of the hall *de L'École de Médecine* to hear the theme discussed, according to usage, that one of the doctors presented himself in robe and cope to dispute the candidate's position, but being urgently called away he excused himself to the Dean, and offering a substitute, received the accustomed fee and left. Uninvited, Mauvillain immediately came forward to perform the duty. The Dean remonstrating, Mauvillain persisted, paying no attention to rules, and for two hours maintained his position. On retiring he in turn demanded his fee, Blondel refused,

Mauvillain insisted, and twitted him on his parsimony. The dispute became warmer; from demands he proceeded to threats; from threats to insults; then in the tumult and confusion that ensued he suddenly seized the cap the Dean had on his head and made off with it. It must be understood, however, that this is the account which Blondel gives of the affair. Mauvillain's version gives quite another complexion. He alleges that the Dean, refusing the emolument, was in the wrong; as for the cap, in the passion and gesticulation of the Dean it fell off by accident, that he from pure politeness picked it up and hurried off, unconsciously carrying with him the article in question. The counter statement, true or false, is little to the point. One thing remains certain, that Mauvillain wrangled with the Dean in open assembly, who, refusing to accept explanation or apology, the assembly broke up in indescribable confusion.

This act of insubordination was not allowed to pass with impunity, and Mauvillain was again condemned to a suspension of four years. But he did not deem his judgment final, and appealed to Parliament, and maintained a lengthened action which we need not follow.

We assuredly have here a marked example of a doctor showing small respect for the hierarchy of his profession. It would, perhaps, be wrong to place too much reliance on the above recorded version of the incident, for Blondel was a partizan far too interested to be impartial. At all events, Mauvillain lived to redeem his faults and render services to science, so far

as that was possible, in contributing with Fagan to the encouragement of chemisty and extending the domain of pharmacy, wherein he shared the fallacies of his contemporaries. He vaunted the specific of rhinoceros horn, the sapphire, emerald, bézoard, and especially antimony, and vigorously railed at the partizans of senna, and *syrop de rose.* Or, again, attacking subjects light and lively of the following nature:—"*An pallidis virginum caloribus Venus?*" which he treated with every kind of *équivoque* and liveliest pleasantry, and all given in the finest Latin. This reveals to us a man humorous, independent, genial, and irascible in temperament, naturally given to opposition, and who could on occasion act as leader of a party. It was that which really happened. In the reaction against the men and manners that followed the final triumph of the antimonial question, Mauvillain the persecuted, the man who had given so strong assistance in the revolution, saw himself destined for the Deanship to which he finally succeeded in 1666. As often happens with the ardent agitators, the new position toned down materially his liberalism. The institution imposed on him the force of its traditions, for he showed himself as jealous of its rights and privileges as his predecessors, and viewed the pretensions of the surgeons, barbers, apothecaries, and even the authority of the Royal Chamber, with as little charity or patience as those he had supplanted. No doubt the doctors "*les estrangers*" in service of the nobles and the Court, who were formerly his colleagues, Des Fougerais and Guénaut, included,

shared the change of feeling. But he was Dean of the Faculty, and on the whole, at least in doctrine, a progressist.

Though otherwise worthy, enough has been advanced to show that if Mauvillain was a man superior to the prejudices and caprices of his *corps*, he was not all that could be wished. Endowed, however, with vast intelligence and much natural vivacity, his humorous and satiric spirit will explain sufficiently the secret of his popularity and his friendship with the poet. His participation in the production of the medical comedies is by no means so certain as is generally imagined, but Mauvillain was at one with Molière in recognising the comicalities. That he furnished ideas and expressions there can be little doubt, but the poet had a name and method for which he was indebted to no one but himself. As a man of mind, associating closely with others like himself, he would draw him out, would encourage him, turn the conversation on the subject which he had at heart, the doctrine, *coteries*, and dissensions of the Faculty. In the process the comedian would collect anecdotes, words and phrases *à propos*, which, when opportunity offered, he utilized, including Mauvillain himself, in the ethical application which it pleased him to make of them.

All this, however, does not prevent us from thinking that if it was required of the comedian to choose between the conservatives, who will have nothing changed since Farnel, and the party who with their antimony admit the circulation of the blood, he would

not hesitate. We feel assured he would, for we must admit him capable of judging. Unless Molière had studied medicine himself he must have closely noted much that fell from those who prescribed it, and that he did so has never been doubted. As we have seen, none was better circumstanced than those he had relations with to furnish the information he required. Of the pedantry and hollowness of what was termed a science, all that they could know affording scope for ridicule, he knew, and strongly has he coloured it; if the general features are to some extent outlived, the *esprit-de-corps* and absurdities that cling to it, and which draw from him those happy and philosophical remarks, become proverbial, have never changed, they remain as true of our own day as of his.

XVII.

In the Médecin Malgré Lui and M. de Pourceaugnac we left our poet wrangling with the doctors. The Amphitryon, George Dandin, and the Avare keep him in active occupation till 1669, when Tartuffe is finally permitted to appear. The revival of this latter comedy reminds us of the incidents of 1662, the outcry raised against the piece, with its prohibition, and the persecution which ensued—in fine, the trials that introduced that train of hostile criticism which accompanied the poet to the last. Had we been left in ignorance of the irritation and chagrin that he endured

about this period, it were easy to imagine it; it may also be admitted that natures much less sensitively constituted than his have often yielded under slighter provocation. But Molière was not cast in an ordinary mould. He seemed even to have derived fresh courage from adversity. Fertile in invention, and with mental force unimpaired, he continued to enrich the national stage with marvels of dramatic art, which exhibit a perfection hitherto unequalled, and made all the more remarkable by the rapidity with which it was attained. Passing from Sganarelle to Alceste seemed with him an affair of changing costume, or at most an *entre-acte.* On his appearance in the capital we saw what his *répertoire* consisted of; a few years more and we have all those charming *rôles* which illustrate the Femmes Savantes, Tartuffe, the Misanthrope, and the Avare—comedy inimitable and sufficient for his fame if he had done nothing else.

And this is not the only merit. Mingling with the genius there is something of the man. Readers must study them to little purpose who do not trace in every line the thinker and observer, or who fail to recognise, even in his liveliest conceptions, the deeper thoughts that constantly betray him. True to his lineage, he perpetuates the skill of the grand humourists and moralists—Rabelais, Montaigne, and Charron. His protests and exposure of prejudice and folly display in the range and elevation of their critique the genuine instincts and sentiments of the poet and philosopher. From time to time there have arisen men who disparage him, question his fame, and even call him a

flatterer, sceptic, and immoral. To vindicate his memory from charges such as these would be to acknowledge a merit to which his detractors, past or present, have no claim. From the intelligent and liberal minded he must ever receive the homage due to a faithful friend of humanity, who knows by turns how to be serious, tender, and cheerful, or eloquent, transforming solitude into enchantment, that flouts sadness, soothes sorrow, imparts to life pleasures unspeakable, and conveys to the mind salutary lessons in all that is just and good.

Such is the light in which he is almost universally viewed by his judicious admirers, though assuredly this was not the estimate of his day nor even of his century. As the servant of his majesty and caterer for the amusement of the Parisians, he learned by sad experience how much it cost him to be superior to his fellows, and also the inconvenience of drawing from the life while living amongst his models. The Trissotins were ever careful to remind him of this fact. And strange to say, he found dramatic rivals still more difficult to please. If it was the poet's marked fatality to be beset with enemies, it is here he chiefly met with them, and here he had the most to bear. They crossed his path at every step, raised cabals and oppositions hard to appease, though in an age so incompetent to judge. They seemed to deny the comedian the right of distinction that they saw in others. Perhaps their jealousy disclosed a suspicion that his merits indicated nothing less than the certainty of final triumph. If desirous that this anticipation should

suffer the severest penalty, they were destined to see their direst malignancy gratified. In 1669, the period at which we have now arrived, an enemy was stirred to join the persecutors—the worst the *comique* had yet encountered, from the fact that this foe professed to vindicate the cause of medicine and the doctors.

The personage referred to was a certain Boulanger de Chalussay, a personage apparently little known, but possessing no mean talent as a writer, and dangerous as an assailant on his own account or as a mercenary in a literary plot, where a rival's character and reputation were at stake. De Chalussay's ingeniously conceived and terrible attack was directed in the form of a five act comedy in verse, entitled Élomire Hypochondre, ou les Médecins Vengés. It does not appear that the work was ever put upon the stage. In a later and in a counterfeit edition, the libeller himself, in the preface addressed to the reader, informs us the original was suppressed. Sieur Molière, getting wind of the affair, and trembling for the consequences, suborned the printer, and had the issue siezed. In de Chalussay's efforts for legal redress, Molière's artifice and influence with the magistracy cost the plaintiff both the action at law and the confiscation of the copies. These precautions on the part of Molière show that he looked upon the libellous production as one of more than ordinary force, and in this he had reason, if our medical estimate of it be correct. His antagonist, however, determined that the triumph should not be complete, for he forthwith tells us he appealed to Parliament, "and what will

still more astonish the defendant, had composed another comedy, entitled the Procès Comique, which he intends presenting to the judge *pour factum.*"

This piece, however, does not seem to have ever been printed—perhaps it was as well. Élomire, or the comedy in question, is of itself enough to satisfy an even morbid curiosity, and one feels naturally induced to ask who this de Chalussay could be, this personality which the silence of his contemporaries with regard to him only tends to intensify. That he moved in literary and artistic circles is most certain, and, judging from his work, he evidently knew Molière well; he was familiar with the outs and ins of his professional and private life—even the secrets of his domestic miseries he had at his command. Add to this the thousand little facts that envy or malicious rumour lays to his charge, and which he carefully collected, and an indictment is presented of so formidable a nature as that no other man save Molière himself could possibly have escaped conviction in the mind of mankind present or to come. If in his libel he admits the comique's merit, and from time to time would try to do him justice in awarding him faint praise, it is only to advance a further charge of folly, or what is worse, crime. It is the usual system of calumniators carried out to perfection.

This comic libel is a biographic document most curious to examine, written with singular originality of spirit, and detailing all that ordinarily possesses interests for students of Molière, but what is more

important for our purpose, furnishing material of the rarest kind with reference to his maladies. This is chiefly the topic the author delights to draw upon in the invention of his comic situations, where he concentrates the full force of his talent, developing it in every conceivable point of view in order to make his victim the more amusingly contemptible. In this he is most successful, creating a character psychologically, morally, and physically so repulsive that in this respect it must be admitted a *chef-d'œuvre*. For dramatic realism the portrait cannot be surpassed—intrigue, incident, and accessories simply serving as a vehicle to give it greater effect.

The action of the piece, which takes its title from the hero's name, Élomire, the anagram of Molière, may be given in a few words.

Élomire has risen from the boards of the strolling stage to be the favourite poet and comedian of the Court and city. But patronage and popularity do not always constitute happiness. The wreath of fame is but a crown of thorns. A prating hypochondriac, he believes himself seriously ill, and nurses the conviction that his malady is a retribution for his ridiculing *à outrance* the doctors and their art—a misfortune aggravated by their vengeful treatment when as a patient they have him in their power. Though he regards the men of science as assassins who have left him in his hopeless plight, he naturally wishes to be cured, and is easily persuaded to make further trial. His friends, imposing on his credulity, clandestinely pass him from one practitioner to another, all of them

keeping up a system of retaliation, and leading him a lively dance, they subject him to all the miseries they can possibly devise.

The first called in are the celebrated popular operators, Barry and Orviéton, who immediately recognise in him the quondam ambulant associate they had taught the secret of their art and nurtured into fame. Recounting to them his triumphs over their enemies of the Faculty in L'Amour Médecin and the terrible reprisals, he is guaranteed recovery even if "he were diseased in person." The consultation continuing, a strong phase of his mental malady is disclosed—his susceptibilities as to his honour as a husband. This point approached awakens his jealousy. With rage and indignation he turns upon these "Tabarins—vendors of balms." They contemptuously defy him. Orviéton, seizing his hat by a corner, twirls it on his head, exclaiming, "*Tarte à la crême,*" a phrase significant, which, exciting him to violence, they escape, leaving him overcome with fury and despair.

Hope revived, he next consents to see some doctors of the Faculty, and to escape detection receives them disguised as a Turkish pasha. But the doctors remarking that the patient spoke better French than a Frenchman, they suspect a mystery. Learnedly the medical pedants proceed with the examination, and naturally arriving at widely different opinions, violently dispute as to the nature of the case; finding disease in every part, whilst the patient obstinately refuses to confess his history and identity, they declare

his case incurable, and forthwith despatch him *ad patres seignores incognito.*

The next adventure is less fortunate. He is attracted to a pretended *séance* of a famous urinographer, *charlatan à la mode,* whose *clientèle,* other doctors of the Faculty have agreed to personate. Élomire falls into the trap prepared for him. He presents himself disguised as a Spaniard, but the professor knows his man, and reads his case through the specimen phial of another. The diagnostic *exposé,* pathological, physical, and moral of his state, given forth with all the force of authority and science, is enough to drive the poor wretch mad, if he was not so before. This brings the culprit to his knees, but seeing hallucination in his, as in other cases, repentance merits pardon, even when the offence is capital. As an infallible remedy a lively comedy, followed by a musical divertissement, is recommended. In this impromptu performance, which concludes the comedy, Élomire is forced to take part. Here a police officer is introduced, who proceeds to apprehend him as an assassin; Élomire trying to get free of the detective, after giving up his purse and leaping through a window, succeeds in making his escape, when the company enjoy the joke at the expense of their enemy, and drink to the success of the *Médecins vengés.*

Such is the nature of the farce—a strange production, not without considerable and satiric power, though vilely misapplied. Élomire as a morbid caricature, grotesque in the extreme, retains in reality an

element of truth—that is, the idea that chronic suffering begets, of its right, to be incessantly complaining. Molière, so sensitively constituted, with all his philosophy, was little likely to escape from this law. Long delicate, his character, naturally good, became, as is well known, sad and irascible. It was consequently easy for an opponent, if perversely disposed, to show him as Élomire—a sufferer, eccentric, and continually bewailing his condition, which no efforts on the part of those around him could persuade him to forget. The portrait he is made to make of himself is certainly maudling and contemptible, but notwithstanding, with a few malignant touches, the writer evolves only too faithfully a condition typically familiar in the domain of medicine. The victim of caprice grows discontented with himself and with the world, but especially with the doctors, who have done him far more harm than good; Élomire put them and their doings in comedy, and not without some reason, judging from the narrative he gives of his afflictions, where he recounts in full detail the adventures and experiences in the production of L'Amour Médecin, which has already been noticed. The description, it is to be feared, is neither over-coloured nor beyond the truth. Unfortunately, when our doctors were in accord their patients fared no better; from the manner as from the matter there was no escape, and all had not the source of consolation to draw upon which our comedian had under the circumstances—that of seeing in them and their ways a confirmation of his own burlesque.

It is, however, in the *séance* with the urinographer

that the virulence of the libel shows out in full force. To form any idea of its intensity the reader must consult the comedy itself, as here we can only draw upon what comes properly within the nature of our study, as, for instance, when he tells him, "You think you are bilious and phthisical; you delude youself; you are splenectic, otherwise hypochondriacal, and all in consequence of the causes stated. Had you held to reason and bridled your propensity for mocking at gods and men, in the fulness of your strength, with wife and children and all that wealth could bestow, you would not night and day be devoured by melancholy. At your repentance at the eleventh hour the world laughs." The poor comedian pleads that he ridicules none but the doctors. In the opinion of these arch-inquisitors, so far is this from being an excuse, that it proves, on the contrary, an aggravation of the offence. And carrying the charges still farther, they remind him of his jealousy—alas! too well founded—following up with the atrocious scandal which charges him with marrying his own daughter—a mystery which required the treasures of erudition of M. Baffara to refute and set at rest. In fine, from every point of view he is proved to be more a fool than a knave—a fool who owes his celebrity to those as foolish as himself. As an author he is a corrupter of morals, as an actor a buffoon. As for his physical infirmities, these receive no more mercy than his mental failings. He is twitted about his cough and the effective use of it he makes upon the stage, and with pretended anxiety on his account they administer

to him the counsels of the friends of Job. Thus, from beginning to end, the animus displayed is virulent and merciless; but enough has been advanced to illustrate our subject.

Examined in its various aspects, it must be confessed that the piece is anything but pleasing. If Boulanger de Chalussay found pleasure in perpetrating such a libel, it puzzles us to conceive what could have been his motive in so over-colouring it. Naturally, Élomire is all that caricature can make him, but, as might be supposed, the doctors are not flattered—a fact which leads us to conclude that the author was not one of them, and it is positively certain that the Faculty did not consider itself much honoured by his service. Everything combines to show a man of letters, who, envious of his rival's success, endeavours to decry him by every means he can devise. Molière, no more without reproach than others, he attacks from the side which was most assailable, and which, happily for him, was one which suited his purpose well.

In his preface Boulanger de Chalussay informs us that the poet having failed to win the favour and distinction his ambition coveted, decided in a moment of disappointment and chagrin "to put himself upon the scene, tracing a portrait as close to reality as those of others he had made; but that for some reason unknown this famous painter has passed the sponge over his picture," and he expresses himself sadly disappointed at the circumstance, "as he hoped to have much pleasure in seeing a likeness from nature, drawn by so eminent an artist. In order to console himself,

however, for such a loss, he has brought together the same ideas for himself in imagination and reproduced them as a picture. It is this he now offers to the public. If Élomire finds it inferior to his own, and thinks it does scant justice to the original, it will be easy for him to convict me of temerity, by reproducing the one he has defaced and placing it upon the boards. By doing so the public will feel obliged to me for the pleasure I have procured them, but should he not feel disposed to do so the debt of gratitude will be none the less, since a copy of such a marvellous lost original is not a little curious."

And, in fact, posterity is bound to grant de Chalussay some acknowledgment, with this reserve, that the idea of Molière's intention of travestying himself is as improbable as the other assertions of his libellous dramatist are false. Allegations such as these must be ascribed to the same sentiments which inspire his muse—that is, all that morbid malice or rival jealousy begets, and never did evil passions produce a work more cruel. Such as it is there is much to be learnt from it.

In transforming the sad history of the poet into that of a monomaniac, where the fixed idea centres in his maladies, we have a most instructive hint. Everywhere a trace of reality or probability. Without allowing ourselves to be carried too far by this impression, we cannot help being surprised at seeing the skill with which the author paints the poor poet's faults and failings, grouping them around a leading feature which sums them all up in itself — hypo-

chrondia—and we are compelled to ask ourselves if a traducer, even the most unmerciful, could entirely owe to his inventive imagination a portrait the very reverse of what his victim is. It would almost follow that the likeness, if not a speaking one, must at least bear some resemblance. As a fact, this cannot be ignored —the key-note of the poet's subsequent career too strongly favours the conviction. It is consequently curious to find this subtle enemy anticipating the comedian in his own design of favouring the public with a Malade Imaginaire.

XVIII.

DURING the last three years of his life Molière was still actively engaged in adding to the list of his immortal works, and the Court and capital were enlivened with L'Amant Magnifique and the Bourgeois Gentilhomme, while the new *salle* of the Tuileries was inaugurated with the splendid spectacle of Psyche, on which the pen of the great Corneille was also employed.

In 1671 the king again set out for Holland, and for a time Molière was free to serve the public, which he supplied with the Fourberies de Scapin. When the Court returned he furnished the Comtesse d'Escarabagnas, and taking a fresh survey of the social field to see whether certain foibles had escaped too lightly, he resumes the subject of the Precieuse, on this occasion

introducing the husband as the victim, a personage who will always command commiseration where *une belle esprit en jupon* is in question. To the *Petit Marquis* who has suffered elsewhere he allows a respite; it is now the *ami de famille à la mode*, the men of letters, with their literary rivalries and cabals, who form the heroes of the Femme Savante—that genuine favourite of the stage.

As Molière's career draws to a close he makes his final effort, and as a product of his genius nothing adds more interest to our subject than the at once gay and sad memorial he bequeathes us—in the Malade Imaginaire he takes his all but tragical farewell of the mortal stage, and dramatic too. For years his health had gradually been giving way and becoming more and more insupportable. It is now exceedingly probable that, as M. Bazin suggests, in this comedy he finds a secret pleasure in depicting the miseries of his condition. This explanation, however, with all its ingenuity, must be received with some degree of caution. We must be careful not to substitute for the ideas of the author conceptions of our own. Yet inquisitive criticism is difficult to control; here, as elsewhere, it has been fertile in invention, and we will scarcely feel surprised when the question is advanced as to the secret whether the conception of his Argan is meant to convey a copy of an original unknown, or a virtual portrait of himself. We have not far to seek for an explanation.

The Malade Imaginaire is something more than personal. It presents nothing difficult to seize, and is

perfectly consistent with the genius of Molière, where all is clear and natural even to his most refined conceptions, if we would but rest content with his own intention. The best proof of this is that this comedy is appreciated with acclamation by every generation of all classes of intellect. The assurance of Boulanger de Chalussay, that Molière intended to portray himself, is worthless according to the more modern school of critics. That the poet contemplated creating a valetudinarian, the nature of whose character his own condition would naturally aid him in the transcription, is extremely probable; still the idea must have taken its rise in something more than facts or feelings purely personal—in that feeling, indeed, to which we owe his best creations, that which he shares in common with others, and to which we have a key in that charming conversation, so often alluded to, with his friend Chapelle, with reference to his foolish but still lingering affection for his frail and unworthy spouse. The hope of seeing her indifference overcome has become an infatuation—a desire both irresistible and without excuse. When twitted with his knowledge of the human heart, that every day delights the public, he is ready to admit his intimate knowledge of its weaknesses, and adds sadly that all his science has not taught him to avert its perils. Molière views the theme from every point, and showed that love of life carried to infatuation, as by Argan, is as illogical and risible as the sentimental passion of Alceste, and even more difficult to overcome. True to nature, the Malade, with his too instinctive faith in physics, clings to every illusion to the last.

But to carry our remarks a little farther. If it is in the Malade Imaginaire that it pleases him to expose a portrait of personal infirmities, it is in the discourse of his brother Béralde he unquestionably supplies us with his own opinions with regard to medicine. Here the resemblance is more striking, and the fact becomes for us the more interesting. On all hands it is admitted that towards the close of his life Molière's scepticism became a disbelief, and he can well exclaim, "There is no greater mummery than men concerning themselves with curing others." But even here it may be taken that he is merely philosophically opposing credulity to incredulity, allowing no play to the instinct of self-preservation—a sentiment which when properly directed, even in sickness, is both a virtue and a duty. But in a mind enfeebled and perverse the feeling will degenerate into a culpable egotism and cowardice. This miserable state poor Argan vividly personifies, and this, strange to say, it is which so sadly represents the condition of Molière himself.

Ah well! it is precisely because the Malade Imaginaire shows so many personal and painful features of the author, that it seems more difficult than we might expect to find his virtual aim, that is, his ideas with regard to medicine. Sentiments, abstract and impersonal, if kept steadfastly in view, cause the final and marvellous production to lose every vestige of what might seem obscure or overdrawn. The oftener we read this powerful work the more we feel impressed with that element, so profoundly sad, which from first to last is blended with

the liveliest and most irresistible flow of comedy. The sick room, where the patient trembles at mimicking death; the drugs; the doctors, who come and go around the sick man like vampires watching for their prey; the wife, who already counts the wealth of her inheritance—no picture can partake more largely of what is mournful and foreshadows death. It almost moves to tears. But let us listen to Argan prating of his ailments, of his doctors, or his brother's incredulity, all this impression vanishes, and we are moved to intensity in a conflict of those feelings where mirth and pity struggle for the mastery.

As to the plot of the Malade Imaginaire, little need be said. The comedy is too well known to require analysis.

The chief personage in the piece is Argan, one who, although enjoying the best of health, persuades himself that he is suffering from a complication of maladies, and who is confirmed in this belief by his medical attendants. The poor gentleman, left a widower, with an only daughter, Angélique, has contracted a second marriage with a designing woman named Beline, whose only object is to see him driven to his grave by the continued absorption of the drugs prescribed for him by the doctors, in order that she may inherit his wordly goods. Angélique has given her heart to Cléante, but her father will not consent to their union, and determines to give her to the son of one of the many doctors who have been drugging him to death's door. The action of the comedy naturally turns upon the ridiculous sayings and doings

and prescriptions of the doctors, the efforts of Argan's sensible brother Béralde, to induce the patient to throw the doctor's physic to the dogs, and the various stratagems employed by Angélique and Cléante, assisted by the quick-witted Toinette, to obtain the accomplishment of this their hearts' desire.

In the opening scene Argan is discovered checking the accounts of his apothecary, M. Fleurant, and the wonder is that there is anything left of the deluded subject, hearing the enumeration of the drugs he has consumed. He then bids Toinette summon his daughter Angélique into his presence and communicates to her his intention of giving her a husband, and the poor girl, who fondly imagines that the husband destined for her is no other than the Cléante of her choice, is driven to despair when she learns that her father intends to bestow her hand upon a Thomas Diafoirus, the son of one of his doctors. But if Angélique is struck dumb with surprise, Toinette's tongue wags freely enough, and she speaks her mind pretty openly to her master, demanding what possible reason he can have for insisting upon such a union. "My reason," says Argan, "is that, seeing how ill and infirm I am, I want to have a medical son-in-law and procure myself allies amongst the doctors, so as to be supplied with a good store of resistance to my malady, and to have in my own family the source of all the necessary remedies, consultations, and prescriptions ready to hand."

To undo the influence of the doctors, all the household who really care for the hypochondriac make

common cause, and a suggestion of his brother Béralde is to take the patient to witness one of Molière's plays upon the subject, a proposal that is received as follows:—

ARGAN.—"Your Molière, with his plays, is an impudent fellow, and I think he might show better taste than to put such honest folk as doctors on the stage."

BÉRALDE.—"It is not the doctors that he holds up to ridicule, but the absurdity of the profession."

ARGAN.—"What right has he, I should like to know, to set himself up as a controller of the medical profession. . . . and exhibit these venerable gentlemen on the stage?"

BÉRALDE.—"What should he exhibit but the different professions that men exercise? We see every day princes and kings on the stage, who are quite as good as doctors any day."

ARGAN.—"No, indeed; I deny it *in toto*. If I were one of those gentlemen I would be revenged for his impertinence; and if he ever falls ill I would let him die without the help of the profession. Whatever he might say or do, I would not order him even the smallest blood-letting. I'd say to him, 'Die! die! that will teach you once for all to ridicule the Faculty.'"

It is unnecessary to trace how the members of the Faculty managed the absurd mono-maniac. The maid Toinette adopts a more effectual mode of treatment by disguising herself, according to Molière's favourite expedient, in the garb of a doctor, and prescribing entirely new medicines for her master, and at last

brings him to his senses by a plan which she proposes. In order to discover how much real affection Beline has for her husband, Toinette persuades him to pretend that he has suddenly died. Though death has for him great terror, he does so; and when Beline appears upon the scene he realises the fact; she thanks heaven for deliverance from a husband who was of no earthly use—"a miserable, disgusting creature, who was continually blowing his nose, coughing and spitting," and immediately sets about securing the papers and the money of the supposed deceased. Argan starting to his feet, the terror-stricken wife flies. The same stratagem being applied to test the affection of his daughter Angélique, she shows a sentimental contrast. The poor girl, plunged in grief and tears, kneeling beside the supposed corpse, protests that she would willingly comply with every wish of her father, and even abandon her love for Cléante. The pretending dead Argan returning to life, now consents to Angélique's marrying Cléante, provided he consents to turn doctor. M. Béralde, seeing things in another light, persuades Argan to himself enter the medical profession, and assures him that the Faculty with which he will be acquainted has consented to receive him, and are prepared to confer upon him the degree then and there, in Argan's own house; Argan consents, and the comedy concludes with the mock ceremony of making a doctor in dog-Latin.

In the composition of this comedy Molière employs various materials already existing in the theatre of

the epoch, such as Boniface, or the Pedant of Brino-Nolano; The Malade Mari of Chevalier; and his own Médecin Volant. But here again it must be owned, if he did not altogether create this dramatic style and its types, that in adapting them he gives them the impress of his own particular genius. If he is an imitator in the characters and intrigue, studied from our point of view the comedy presents us with a comic harvest fresh and hitherto untouched. In the treatment of the medical element, to which this wonderful production owes its charm and interest, he is independent of all others past or present; he out-rivals them, and probing more deeply professional defects, carries his analysis into the haziest *arcana* of the *métier*. From the raising of the curtain till it falls the piece is the fiercest satire on medical art and science. Nothing of its professors, practice, teachings, and institutions is omitted that could supply a point for raillery and ridicule. From the moment that we see the Malade summing up his monthly account of the officinal *fratra* of *materia medica*—a morbid spectacle which shows that M. Purgon has *passé par là*—until the moment when, as new licentiate, he pronounces the final *juro* to the chorus, "*Vivat, vivat, vivat, vivat, cent fois vivat,*" the play of irony, critical or burlesque, never flags.

The ballet interludes and *cérémonie* apart, all this dramatic licence is simple realism, so faithfully does the poet cling to nature in every scene. With respect to the *dramatis personæ* it is altogether the same. The medical personages he parades before us are all verit-

able portraits. MM. Fleurant, Purgon, and Diafoirus, young and old, be it observed, are not simple comicalities, though the dramatic situation makes them seem so; they are genuine types of the professional order then existing. M. Purgon is not the man, *de permettre qu'on se moque içi de ses ordonnances, et qu'on fait refus de prendre les remèdes qu'il a préscrit.* M. Diafoirus, so grave and imposing, is a profound respecter of the *forms* and *rules.* If he is not ambitious and prefers a general practice to a courtier *clientèle,* who *toujours veuillent absolument que leur médecins les guérissent,* he very wisely makes the sacrifice, and desires no better future for his son. Again, Thomas is really a worthy bachelor, and, though his father candidly admits he is by no means bright, still *à force de battre le fer il est venu à avoir les licences,* and if we willingly approve of Angélique refusing him her hand, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that there was little merit in so doing. It is not every day, as in the comedy, that one has a Cléante, young, rich and handsome, at one's disposal; with all these qualities the choice becomes easy.

These characters, then, are average representatives of the reputable Parisian practitioners of that day, and upon the whole it may be said they were not unfairly chosen. In L'Amour Médecin and in M. de Pourceaugnac, Molière has familiarised us with the ways and manners of such learned doctors in relation to their patients; here the picture is yet more strongly drawn, and as he crowns his efforts by satirically in-

troducing us into the *foyer* and school in which were taught the theory and practice of the art, it is well to be reminded of the realities from which he drew his pantomime of the *cérémonie* which forms the after piece.

XIX.

PASSING from the scene with its doctors, comic or grotesque, to the amphitheatre of the old Faculty of Paris or Montpellier, we are still spectators at a comedy. If the performance changes, the halls have still their *mise en scène* and dramatic action no less piquant; only now the actors are the French medical celebrities of the seventeenth century in full professional glory. We see a crowd of these worthies, with their four-cornered caps, violet *soutanes* and red robes trimmed with ermine. Beneath them sit a number of students, wearing the black robe of the bachelor; the dean presides, and in a harangue of Ciceronian selectness celebrates the glories of the Institution. Here you have pictured an occasion of high ceremonial enacting by a famous Faculty, which has from time immemorial claimed the apostolic and exclusive privilege *Legendi, interpretandi, et faciendi medicinam, hic et ubique terrarum, in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritûs Sancti,* and whose anathemas were ever ready for those who dared to question its authority or the fantastic therapeutics of its arbitrary system.

Looked at through a retrospect of two centuries, their course of study and the ceremonies accompanying them are as curious as their doctrines. To fully appreciate the comic light in which Molière represents them in the Ceremonies of the Malade Imaginaire, we must know something of the actualities of the case.

In preparing for the doctorate, the medical professors of the past in France, as elsewhere, seem to have been too much absorbed in erudition, philosophy, interminable disputations, and other remnants of scholastic tradition to dream of teaching medicine practically. Incredible as it may appear, the majority of students attained the degree of bachelor, and discoursed learnedly of the nature and cure of disease before having seen a case. The grand attraction lay in dialectic skill, academic tiltings, and successful oratory, for which a brilliant future was the coveted reward. They seemed to forget that medicine was meant for the patient, and not for the physician. Their great object was to know and discourse of all that the ancients had said about health and disease. They clung blindly to their opinions, refused to listen to reason and experience, and like Thomas Diafoirus, were "firm in dispute and obstinate as a Turk about principles, never asking an opinion, and following a point of reason to its furthest logical position." After two years of devotion to this course of study, the student was eligible for the Baccalauréat, which was followed at intervals with further tests, such as the thesis *Quodlibétaire,* thesis *Cardinalis,* and other

proofs of scientific and argumentative skill. After another two years' drilling in these formalities and polemical gymnastics, there came the examination for the *Licence*, admission to the *Vespérie*, followed with the Capping.

The ceremony in the comedy is the summing up of the curriculum. This amusing process of conferring the doctorate, and to which the poor Malade is made to submit, might lead to the belief that Molière had here abandoned himself to the extravagance of comic licence, but here also, with the institutions of the rival Faculties before him, he had not far to look for his models, the forms were familar to the public. We have already referred to Locke paying one school a visit on the occasion of conferring a degree; as he had also been in Paris, he had no doubt witnessed also the performance of the comedy. His description is summary, but what renders it instructive is its close resemblance to the formality in Molière's comedy; nor should this surprise us, since the candidate is termed in the comedy *dignus alumnus de Montpellier*. The strongest points are evidently from a rival source, and it is more than probable those who belonged to the Faculty of Paris, and assisted the poet in his compositions, were only too happy to have an opportunity of turning upon Montpellier a current of ridicule to which their own school and the whole realm of medicine was liable.

To the brilliant *coterie* of the *beaux-esprits* of which Ninon de Lenclos formed the centre, the *cérémonies burlesques* owe their origin. Ninon, Madame

de la Sablière, La Fontaine, Chapelle and Boileau, in their admiration for the great dramatist, aided and encouraged him in the attacks he incessantly made upon the method of the schools, and the art of imposing upon the world by words. To assail credulity in the domain of religious ideas, or high-class prejudice, would have been dangerous, but the learned professions of law and medicine lay open to assault. From infirmities of health and temperament he was constantly reminded of medicine, and it was upon this that his hottest fire was especially directed.

It was at the hotel of Madame de la Sablière, on the occasion of one of those joyous suppers when her *salon* became the *rendezvous* of the distinguished and intellectual circles, that *The Cérémonies* were improvised. The conversation turning on the absurd ceremonial formalities of the Faculty of Medicine, Molière, who was then engaged in writing the Malade Imaginaire, communicated his design; and as the Ceremony of the Bourgeois Gentilhomme had succeeded so admirably, they prevailed upon him to carry out the same idea still further in the comedy in hand, and to favour the Parisians with a burlesque copy of the procedure of the doctors in their robes, their stilted Latin discourses, and their scientific theses gravely sustained with all the antiquated pomposity observed at the conferring of the Doctorate. As yet the pageantry had not been looked upon as intrinsically ridiculous; a remnant of veneration still attached to this symbolic spectacle of a by-gone age. But here also innovation was at work. The familiar spirits of the circle vied with each other

in sapping the fabric which those of the eighteenth century were destined entirely to sweep away. The comedian supplied the plan, in which each took his part in contributing his Latin couplets to the wondrous protest, and Ninon was not behind the rest in the invention of piquant verse.

It is also probable that there mingled in the assembly of the beautiful Marquise on this occasion some members of the Faculty itself, well known to Molière, such as Bernier, Mauvillain, and Léonard, all sceptic more or less. Certain details of the composition show an intimate knowledge of the interior of the Faculty, and betray the hand of the professional expert in its production—a suspicion which would not necessarily imply secret malice or design. There could be nothing objectionable in professional personages, learned and grave as they doubtless were, giving way to the humorous gaiety of the instant; it is rather to be presumed that in adding their contingent of pleasantries to the prevailing current of comic satire, they would consider themselves justified, as men of mind, in taking part in the spirited revel, little dreaming that thereby their cherished institution was in any way endangered. Such was the origin of the *Cérémonies*, to which—if closely analysed—the drama itself might almost be regarded as a mere accessory.

The burlesque is in the Macaronic *patois* of the Italian monk, Théophile Folingo, and possessed the double advantage of enabling Molière to mimic the classic language of the profession, and at the same time to render his witticisms intelligible to a French

popular audience. The scene, thus composed, as it remains to us in the ordinary editions of his works, must be regarded as an abridgment. This is sufficiently established by the additional fragment discovered by M. Magnin some years ago, and which restores to us the *salon* version in its original integrity. Molière, as a man of taste, especially in all that appertains to scenic effect, seems to have curtailed and expurgated those passages which were the most *outré*, and so adapted the performance to the requirements of the public stage.

An outline of the school curriculum and formalities of the piece merit an abridged notice.

In the final act of the comedy we see the triumph of the stratagem by which the Malade, Argan, is rescued from the hands of his physicians and apothecaries; we see every hope exploded of securing for a son-in-law a member of the Faculty. To compensate for this loss, his friends prevail upon Argan to take the degree himself. Alive to his deficiencies, he has his conscientious scruples, but they are easily overcome by assuring him that "with the cap and robe he will know enough of Latin, disease, and pharmacy for every purpose." Should this be insufficient he has only to remember that "the beard" with which "he is amply furnished makes up for more than half of what is recognised as a physician." The joke is practical to audacity, his philosophic brother Béralde candidly admits it, but then the season claims indulgence, as carnival is at its height; so the proceeding may claim some excuse.

The troop of grotesque doctors, surgeons, and apothecaries now enters; they take their places, and the ceremony begins. The *séance* is opened by the president. In the pompous eulogy of medicine it is not difficult to recognise the formal discourse of the *Vespérie.* According to the usage of the school, the object of the assembly is disclosed. In this instance it is for the examination of a bachelor, to know if he can give sufficient proof of possessing *dignum materium medici.* Inferring that all the necessary forms till now have been complied with, the process of interrogation and cross-questioning proceeds. As might naturally be supposed, it is neither puzzling nor profound, for it is to be remembered that Béralde has summoned for the occasion "a Faculté of his friends," in order that favour due to friendly feeling may exercise its rights. In the history of medicine this has never been impossible; then, as now, there has always been some qualifying body, provincial if not metropolitan, where honours might be obtained on easy terms; holding a diploma being evidence at least of the graduate's ability to pay for it. In any case, for the sake of appearances, it is to be supposed that everything would pass according to the ritual of the genuine Faculty of Paris; we have consequently here its leading features clearly indicated.

First comes physiology. Question: "Why does opium produce sleep?" a suggestive subject, which transports us at once into the region of occult qualities, and Aristotelian metaphysics.

Then follows pathology, where dropsy, asthma, and

hectic fever form the substance of the test. Presenting little that is novel, it is a comic epitome of the antiquated humoralism and its therapeutic corollary, which formed the basis of the routine system professionally received. Here the difference between the comedy and science still remains an open question, nor do notions of foul humours and their vaunted remedial measures show prospect of being superseded by others more platonic.

The theoretic knowledge having satisfied our examiners, practice is submitted, and an opinion required as to the treatment indicated in particular cases. This passage is the highest wrought as well as the most amusing. The primitive version furnishes us with no less than eight examples, all equally remarkable for sentiment of the strongest Gallic flavour; reduced to four in our editions, with the humour equally diluted, there is little to embarrass modern students or spectators.

The candidate having given such brilliant proofs of his capacity, his reception is no longer doubtful, and he now proceeds to take the oath, swearing faithfully to observe the statutes, to reverence the opinions of his seniors, and never to make use of remedies except those sanctioned by them, even if the patient's death should be the consequence! The formula in every article is a close copy of that of the Paris Faculty original; if pardonably somewhat emphasised, there is nothing to prevent its having been subscribed to by one seriously imbued with what is termed medical *esprit-de-corps*. The immortal "juro" solemnly repeated, the

president then thrusts the cap upon his head, accompanying the act with a metrical enumeration of the various functions which the licentiate is henceforth privileged to practise.

The rhapsody is evidently a reminiscence of the benediction of the genuine chancellor, but the liberty taken with the harangue of this dignified ecclesiastical functionary must be accepted with reserve. Drugging, purging, &c., is consistent, but bleeding, puncturing, and cupping are altogether surgical. As we have already seen, the doctors bound themselves to avoid the knife as they would the *peste*. This, however, is no reproach to Molière, for to him, as well as to the public he had to amuse, physicians and surgeons were but one; even the apothecaries, who escort the Faculty's triumphal car like Roman lictors, arms in hand, are included in the ranks of the order; it adds to the theatrical comic effect—the object of Molière's special aim. Nor are they the worse for it, assuredly; as we have seen, he never treated them more severely than they did each other.

The worthy bachelor having undergone the learned ordeal with success, it now remains for him to thank his masters for the honour conferred. His speech is a model of its kind. Profuse in acknowledgments, it is in vain he compares them to the "stars of heaven," the "waves of the ocean," and the "roses of spring-time." It would be impossible for him to surpass in form or sentiment the encomiums which at that time formed the current figures of the genuine academical discourse. Knowing the phraseology, servile to

idolatry, the courtiers, officials and men of letters of the period were accustomed to indulge in, we need not feel surprised if the puerile exaggerations of the licentiate's reception were carried to the highest pitch of lyric metaphor. He was the "new star on the horizon," a "beacon to illuminate posterity the most remote." He unites in him every virtue, every gift every brilliant quality, and equals, if he does not surpass, the greatest genius of antiquity. A licentiate who found himself treated as an ordinary mortal might reasonably consider he was poorly compensated for the years he had passed in study. The *paranymphe* discourse on the occasion of Mauvillain's reception, which has been referred to in a previous chapter, is an excellent illustration of the style made use of.

This comparative sketch of the medical school of the Faculty and of the theatre presents us with a contrast. If we must look upon the sparkling satire as extravaganza, at least it follows closely the reality. Were we to witness the Faculty's performance of the ceremony of conferring the doctorate in that day, with all its antiquated accessories, it would be difficult to see where the gravity of the solemnity ceases and where the burlesque begins. The superannuated modes and language of the ancestral worthies are no longer ours; they are as foreign in their customs as in their practice, both of which lie buried in the past. Still, from time to time, we like to see it all in mimicry revived. All honour to the circumstances and royal patronage which rendered this pleasure

possible for us. In the full enjoyment of wit and gaiety, when the King had returned from his first campaign in Holland, after he had for years dazzled Europe with his government, victories, and gallantry, then was it that the comedy of the Malade Imaginaire was produced. But in the wake of this brilliant period of the reign, troubles and disasters were following. During the sad declining years of Louis the Fourteenth, what would have become of Molière's genius? In what way could it have shown itself? The great comedian who lashed the despotism of the family régime, attacked marriage, where choice of affection went for nothing; attacked the entire contemporary world of teaching; attacked the love of life, with its eternal weakness and readiness to be duped—would this satirist of humanity have pandered to the King grown sick, devout, and old; could he even have taken part against the levelling tendencies and innovations of his friends? It is impossible to say with certainty. The problem remains unsolved; at all events Molière's death was timely, his task was finished.

XX.

HAVING traced the eventful life of Molière as author and comedian, briefly noticing the writings illustrative of our study, his character, malady, and death now require special consideration.

Madame Poisson has given an admirable portrait of the man, and such as we might readily conceive him to have been. She presents him to us as of medium stature and development, well limbed, and noble in his bearing, with a certain gravity in his gait and manner; his complexion dark and features heavy, with eyebrows thick and strong, whose movements were a powerful comic element in facial action. And such are precisely the features M. Seurre aîné has so finely caught in the statue that adorns the fountain of the Rue Richelieu, familiar to Parisians and to visitors.

While health and strength permitted, Molière was free and social in his habits. His handsome annuity of thirty thousand livres was little in excess of his requirements. In his retreat at Auteuil, with his boon companions, Chapelle, Jonsac, and the two Despreaux, he, perhaps, too freely mingled pleasure with philosophy; the moderate *régime* of Laforest, his domestic confidant, existed at a time when virtue had become necessary. The Marshall de Vivienne, a constant guest and kindred spirit, lived with him, like Lilias with Terence. Among others who courted his society, and loved him for himself, the medical friends, Doctors

Léonard and Mauvillain, would see much of the genuine nature of the poet. In his ordinary relations with the world, as with great minds generally, his manner was severe; the gaiety which sparkled in the comedy was rarely to be traced in his countenance; he found a secret pleasure in making others laugh, but seldom laughed himself, and frequently gave way to those sallies of witticisms, pointed and sarcastic, with which his personal anecdotes abound.

With increasing years he became more irritable and morose; occasional fits of melancholy embittered his existence, rendering life a burden. Domestic unhappiness was not calculated to improve the mental state, but the causes lay chiefly in the temperament and physical condition of the man himself. His constitution, naturally weak and delicate, showed prematurely the effect of cares and the efforts inseparable from the active sphere of dramatist and actor. Occasional hæmorrhage from the lungs, and general aggravation of the chest affections from which he suffered for several years, at times compelled him to seek advice of Mauvillain. For one who had declared that the "physician is a personage who is paid for talking nonsense by the sick bed till nature either kills or cures the patient," such attacks as those must have been irksome; besides, his popularity and the interests of his troupe were both at stake—serious considerations for a nature so susceptible, and rendering him a subject difficult to control.

Great imaginative and artistic powers seem almost incompatible with the ordinary normal standard

of humanity. Where such qualities exist, the intellectual balance is unequal, and the characters unsuited for the parts we have to play in common life. Molière is an illustration of the fact. Susceptible and impulsive in his diposition, his affections appear also to have been ill directed. He was unfortunate in his amatory attachments, and remained through life a stranger to domestic happiness and comfort. His long relations with Madame Béjart, the leading actress of his company, were followed by another, more legitimate but less felicitous. At the age of forty-two he became enamoured with a rising *artiste* of his company, young enough to be his daughter, the niece of his former mistress, and took the fatal step of marrying her, thus adding to his miseries.

The pretty girl whose portrait he has so admirably drawn in the Bourgeois Gentilhomme, was scarcely eighteen years of age when she became his wife. Her frivolity and love of admiration made her a most unsuitable partner for a husband so infirm and serious in his disposition—disadvantages for which genius fails to compensate at such an age as his. It was in the Princess Elide, in which she played the leading character so charmingly, she first commenced to win admirers and give rise to scandal. Molière, whose love for her was passionate and tender, too clearly saw the frailty of his wayward spouse, the *enfant gaté* of the stage, and with a choleric melancholy experienced all the torments of a jealous husband. The man who had exposed so openly this weakness of the human heart might have been supposed incapable of feeling

such a passion; but this was contrary to his nature, and he showed himself, as powerless to control his mental state as to protect himself from that ridicule he had so often heaped on others.

Notwithstanding mutual differences, he always showed a firm affection for his wife. Three children were the fruits of this unhappy marriage; the first, a son, who died in infancy, had as sponsors the King and Henriette d'Angleterre—a proof of the esteem his generous sovereign entertained for him. At this period of his life his worldly circumstances were excellent. Free from financial anxieties, and with a national reputation established, there was little a valetudinarian in his position could complain of, but his miserable union poisoned every sentiment of hope or pleasure. *La Comédienne Gallante*—an infamous and highly-coloured pamphlet put in circulation somewhat later—shows how just were his reasons for complaint. The amours of Madame Molière were scandalous in the extreme, associating her name with personages of the *beaux monde*, well known for their gallantries. This fact still more contributed to his sorrows, and soured his better feelings. For years however, his sincere attachment, and the hope of conquering her indifference, induced him to avoid a separation, which was ultimately found to be desirable for both of them.

Amid all these sorrows and perplexities, Molière still continued to amuse the public audiences and fulfil his duties at the court. He even seemed to derive a kind of inspiration from his private griefs; some of his

finest works were written at this period of his life, and stripped of their comic drapery they may be said to be a reflex of the *rôle* he played at heart. Mirth as well as sorrow has its tears; in seeing Molière ably represented we are touched by the human truths that he reveals; they take us by surprise; and at times the feelings scarce know how to play to see the sad and gay so strangely blended. In the later comedies this character and power is far too general to allow us doubt of the influence of his state of health upon his genius.

But for his bodily infirmities, as well as those of his mind, he found artistic uses. The cough he had been subject to for so many years became a feature in his style, and gave a pleasing and peculiar force to certain of his *rôles*. Molière's cough, like the lameness of Béjart, his fellow actor, was for a long time a tradition of the Parisian stage. But this which was habitual, as years advanced, sometimes assumed a serious form and interfered with his professional duties. Molière was in reality a sufferer; his malady was slowly undermining his life. In 1667 he was obliged to leave the stage for several months—the period sad and miserable to which M. Boulanger de Chalussay, his arch-enemy, alludes when he attributes to a consuming irritability that which was the secret sign of fatal disease.. Depicting cruelly his deplorable state, "it was then," he says, "the doctors bled and purged him." In other words, it was then he allowed himself to be treated and cared for by them. Nor was this suprising; he was in this like others, and perhaps not yet

without some hope of remedy. Though it is certainly not our duty to take up the defence of such an adversary as Boulanger de Chalussay, it is always curious to note the light in which an enemy regarded him.* A rival's talent skilfully applied had little difficulty in portraying the malady of Élomire or Molière as simple hypochondria, to which in reality it presented so many phases of resemblance; that of a man wholly wrapped up in himself, complaining incessantly, and within doors submitting to all those caprices of physicians which he so amusingly condemns upon the stage. But these efforts were the last and fruitless. Never having shown much faith in medicine, what little now remains soon vanishes; he regards it as a useless art and a delusion which he hates; he throws physic to the dogs, and will have none of it.

For some time he and Madame Molière had lived apart, but about ten months before his death they were reconciled. In some respects the circumstance was happy, but the change it caused in his mode of life was unfavourable to his state. In order to have all in common, the rigid regimen of milk diet gave place to the use of animal food and wine, which proved unsuitable. It was a wicked remark of the Abbé Geoffrey, "that pleasure was not so wholesome as happiness; the reconcilation," said he, "of a husband, old and jealous, with a wife young and coquettish, was inconsistent with the cherishing his enfeebled health required." Strange spectacle, that of a man of genius in love at fifty, brought almost to the grave with the tender passion, sick and scoffing at medicine, dragging

himself upon the stage when scarce capable of uttering the words he had composed, and after having ridiculed all social existence, all human life, sacrificing himself to a personal irony.

The death of a son, whose loss he felt acutely, occurred about this time, and also tended much to aggravate his suffering, and hasten the progress of his malady. As the irritation of the chest attained its worst condition, affecting his delivery and voice, the circumstance was alarming in his case. It was during this melancholy crisis that Boileau pressed him to renounce the theatre, and received the memorable reply, "With me it is a point of honour not to quit the stage. What is to become of these poor people who depend upon me for their livelihood?" It was in the interests of his troupe he persisted in clinging to a profession which his health and life required he should relinquish.

The nature of the malady which for years he had been nursing like a wolf within his breast, is far too strongly marked to leave a doubt upon our minds. The condition in which some profess to see thoracic aneurism, or cardiac disease, is much more easily explained; in his case these terms have more attraction than reality to recommend them. Rare diseases are not reserved for rarest men—here nature is impartial. Molière was an ordinary *poitrinaire*, the victim of that malady which the statistics of mortality have vulgarised. In every allusion, personal or narrated, respecting his health and sufferings, we can trace a faithful record of a chronic ulceration of

the lungs, continually masked by ailments peculiar to his highly-wrought mind and constitution morbidly affected, destructive processes internally at work, and easily misread. To his worshippers it is the genius struggling with mental affliction, rather than the mortal suffering from bodily disease, that shows throughout the melancholy history of his illness. The characteristic cough, emaciation, constitutional debility, and occasional pulmonary hæmorrhage, present the veritable portraiture of those organic ravages, indefinitely prolonged, which receive the name of phthisis. It is rarely that we see that amount of constitutional resistance which the great comedian's case exhibits; the all-unequal contest between life and death generally terminates much sooner, but, terminate when it may, the victory is never doubtful—the patient must finally succumb.

So it was with Molière. At length the fatal day arrived; contrary to the counsel of his friends, he persisted in appearing in the *rôle* which proved to be his last. On the evening of February 17th, 1673, in performing Argan in the Malade Imaginaire, towards the conclusion of the piece, and at the moment of pronouncing the immortal *Juro!* he was seized with a fatal illness; he tried to hide his feelings in his wonted laugh, but the fact was too serious to escape the remark of those around him. The performance finished, he retired. It was his farewell of the stage. Accompanied by his favourite associate, Baron, he was conveyed to his residence in the Rue Richelieu, close to the statue and fountain erected to his memory.

His death-bed scene, though touching, was quite in keeping with his character; he died as he had lived, the comic moralist. Baron ordered him some light soup, which he refused, remarking, "My wife's soup is, for me, real *eau forte;* you know the curious compound she makes of it;" he preferred instead some bread and cheese Laforest, his domestic, brought him. But Molière, like his fellow men in illness, was not proof to solace, and willingly accepted homely measures far more childish than the prescriptions of the Faculty. His wife had promised to make him a pillow stuffed with drugs to make him sleep; he asked for it, observing it was only the internal remedies that he objected to. "Your medicines frighten me. Why should I lose the little that remains of life?" Seized with a violent fit of coughing he asked for a light to examine his expectorations, and remarked that a change was taking place. Seeing Baron was alarmed at his appearance and the bleeding, he calmly reminded him that there was nothing new in that, as he had lost as much at other times; but the hæmorrhage continued. An hour had scarcely elapsed from the time he left the theatre when he quietly expired. Towards the last his wasted figure betrayed the fitful fever of his life; though only fifty-one he was older than his years.

The death of Molière is the subject of a charming picture by Vafflard. It represents the dying poet receiving consolation from two nuns, his sole attendants as he breathes his last. The composition in treatment, as well as detail, is as truthful as it is touching.

When the sad event occurred the two *religieuses* were living in the family. Their presence and assistance was not without its value in the trying hour. At the moment their generous host expired the charitable ladies found themselves alone beside his couch.

XXI.

THUS closed the life of our comique. In motley he preferred to draw his final breath—a manner of death most characteristic of the man. Molière could not live apart from his stage element, and like all other sufferers of the morbid class, deceived himself as to his actual condition. Was it, he might have asked himself, disease, decay, or moral misery? There can be little doubt that all these causes were present in his case, and combined to operate in such a way that it must have been difficult to know how to name it. Molière, least likely of all men to feel satisfied on this point, would have us believe that, at any rate, he felt fully convinced that medical skill had nothing to offer in the way of remedy, and this conviction he reiterated in every note, from gay to grave, up to the moment of his death.

To refer again to the Malade Imaginaire, the protest of the love-sick shepherdess of the prologue is at one with that of the enlightened Béralde of the comedy—presumably the poet's own view—and forming, as it

were, the text of the present section we quote, as follows:—

> Vôtre plus haut savoir n'est que pure chimère,
> Vains et peu sages médecins;
> Vous ne pouvez guérir, par vos grands mots latins,
> La douleur qui me désespére.
>
> Ne prétendez pas le finir,
> Ignorants médecins, vous ne sauriez le faire:
> Vôtre plus haut savoir n'est que pure chimère.
> Ces remèdes peu sûrs, dont le simple vulgaire
> Croit que vous connaissez l'admirable vertu,
> Pour les maux que je sens n'ont rien de salutaire;
> Et tout vôtre caquet ne peut être reçu
> Que d'un Malade Imaginaire.

In tracing carefully the origin and development of Molière's medical antipathy, this fact appears remarkable; he commenced his career with his Médecin Volant, and twenty years later he closed it with the Malade Imaginaire. It is with the doctors he began his vein of satire; it is with them he finished. This singular predilection is mysterious, and implies more than the design of catering to the public taste or with any eye to profit. Not that he was incapable of that, or less disposed than others to turn his powers to good account; but in the interest of his profession this was a necessity. Besides all this, from the conscientious severity he so often mingled with raillery, there must have been some deeply rooted feeling or conviction actively at work and powerfully influencing his genius, when medicine was the subject of his thoughts. Is Molière, apart from the men and manners whose fallacies and follies he whips with the censure of

ridicule, really and by conviction the declared enemy of medicine? This is the interesting question that has to be answered.

To entirely reject the famous *castigat reddendo mores*, which comedy has for its motto, might savour of injustice; still it may be doubted if Molière observed the precept otherwise than in its narrowest sense. That which scarcely applies to manners, applies much less to doctrine; teaching is not the mission of the drama, nor have the greatest artists dreamed of converting the fictions of the theatre into a collective system of instruction, in replacing the pulpit with the stage. A comedy may be excellent though containing no salutary lesson, or reminding us but little of what is called morals in actions. On the other hand, while inculcating admirable precepts, it may altogether fail to satisfy scenic requirement; the dramas of Voltaire and Addison are instances in point; Molière's productions are of quite another type, and we admire them for their speciality. They supply us with the workings of our common nature as the author sees it, and that without regard to formula or system. These were strangers to his artistic province; from his particulars we generalise and can always with certainty grasp the truth, for though we may not think him either a profound or philosophic thinker, yet in his most humorous conceptions we meet with unexpected intellectual flashes, which involuntarily betray deep thoughts and the highest powers of observation. Never is this quality more marked than when the subject of the healing art engages his atten-

tion. Yielding to the impulse of a wayward inspiration, with what unsparing dexterity he lays bare the weakness and fond illusions which flatter us! Yet with all this it is easy to perceive how little he himself rises above this form of faith so natural to humanity.

As already remarked, there is in his opinions and critique a process of development more or less traceable. In his earlier pieces, where the contemporary doctors are introduced, as in the Médecin Volant, L'Amour Médecin, and even in M. de Pourceaugnac, it is more the external form he challenges—the professional mannerism, language, and costume; the spirit he indulges in is that of a simple, harmless ridicule which he seldom oversteps. As professors he presents us with his favourite types, the pedant and the charlatan—specimens of humanity we so often find closely allied. Of the two his preference is for the pedant—the man learned, credulous, yet sincere withal. "Who is strong in his *Humanities*, knows Aristotle and Galen by heart—this is enough for him. He is one who believes in the rules more than in all the demonstration of mathematics; the desire to examine them would be criminal in his idea. In medicine he sees nothing obscure, nothing doubtful, nothing difficult, and can with an impetuosity of forethought, and confident audacity, that outrage common sense and reason, prescribe bleeding and purgation right and left, regardless of the consequences. With all this, be it observed, he desires no mischief to result from what he may do to the patient. It is with the best inten-

tion in the world that he would send him out of existence, and in despatching him he only does what he would do in the same case to his wife, his children, or even himself, if need be."

The personage these skilful touches realise might pass for a mere creation of the comic muse, but this must not be imagined; here the pose and portrait of the original is too finely reproduced. He is the genuine physician of the city; one deeply imbued with the purest doctrines of the Faculty; one who carries his veneration for the ancients so far as to refuse to understand, or even hear of the new discoveries and opinions of the century in which he lives and moves, "especially those relating to the circulation of the blood and such like nonsense." With all their mummery there is not a jest or thought he gives expression to, but is, or may be, in perfect harmony with the teaching and doctrine of the old school. The style and logic of the dissertation indulged in is equally the same. The truthfulness to nature is still more *piquant* as their scientific resources are exposed. Here Molière displays his marvellous powers of criticism, and in a vein of inimitable burlesque parades before us the then current system of pathology.

It is true this is done with an eye to stage requirement and effect, but the mythic Galenism *à la mode* is only too apparent through the comic guise. Very naturally the liver and the spleen occupy the chief place in the dialogue, for they are the origin of the animal spirits, the bile and atra-bile, that most

mysterious humour which escapes all modern observation, but as Galen must have seen it, of course this was of but little moment. It may be suggested that "the derangement of the splenic parenchyma, that is to say the spleen, requires corrective," and as it is objected that probably the liver is at fault. "Yes, precisely so; who speaks of the parenchyma speaks of both, because of the close sympathy that exists between them by means of the *vasa breva* and *pylorus*, and frequently the *meatus choledicus*." Again, "the morbid cause may arise from the putrescent humours, tenacious and glutinous, that are contained in the lower bowels." As a specimen of pedantic reasoning in such a case the diagnosis of the first physician in M. de Pourceaugnac is far too rich to be omitted. It must be remembered the patient is supposed to be suffering from that "form of melancholy the doctors call the hypochondriacal, to distinguish it from the other two," for the "celebrated Galen learnedly establishes, as is usual with him, three species of that malady," and he continues to observe, "what it is important to remark in this instance is, that the first arises from disturbance of the brain itself; the second from the blood being atra-bilious; the third, termed hypochondria, which is here present, proceeds from some vice of the belly and inferior regions, but particularly of the spleen, the heat and the inflammation of which carries to the brain of the patient quantities of those dense and crude effluvia whose black and noxious vapours corrupt the functional play of the princess-faculty, and constitutes the

malady with which, according to our reasoning, the patient manifestly is affected."

Nothing can surpass such passages as these; the fantastic notions may surprise us in the present day, but the ponderous folios of antiquity nowhere contain so clear an exposition of the morbid processes supposed to be at work in the disease in question. According to the doctrine this is self-evident. "The source of the evil is the thick and fecculant humours, or the black and gross vapours that obscure, and infect and pollute the animal spirits." As a demonstration, what can be more simple or more beautiful? Unfortunately it is open to one objection—it is nothing but the purest fiction. Molière knows it, and triumphantly makes the vulgar audience his confidante, and has no reserve in so doing; his grand critique embraces all the principles and practices. From the mass of scientific and logical absurdity he unveils, these examples will show sufficiently how interesting the subject was to him. If the paraphrases should seem at times exaggerated, as compared with the original, all idea of contrast ceases; the family likeness he so finely hits is close enough to pass unchallenged, it is only the drollery of the plot and perhaps a *carnavalesque* interlude that betray the counterfeit, and even the domestic troubles of an Argan in the Maccaronic pratings of the *Cérémonie* fail to mask the close affinities that underlie or lose themselves in the mad gaiety of the general action. It is this constant play of learning, wit, and farce combined that makes his comic muse the greatest satire that has

ever been produced in reference to the scholastic medical method. Whilst the common sense that peeps through the drapery of character and buffoonery forms the richest feature of his genius.

But at length the Malade Imaginaire is brought out, and we recognise what advances Molière has made! The jesting still continues, but contempt and disbelief now dominates. Until this period anything he has said regarding the utility of medicine in the fullest sense is of but little weight. The passage from the preface of Tartuffe, where he adds the medical art is excellent though frequently abused, has too much the tone of verbal precaution to afford any definite indication of a fixed opinion; still earlier in his career one casual expression conveys a different view. In the Festin de Pierre it is affirmed "that the object of medical treatment is to amuse the mind till nature cures the malady, or the remedy kills the patient." It is, however, the hero of the piece who speaks, Don Juan, no less sceptical in medicine than he is in everything else that men revere, and whose opinions Molière need not be supposed to always share. The time has now, however, arrived when scepticism seemingly gives way to firm conviction; he gives medicine up, and will have none of it. Here he introduces a personage who represents too clearly the type of correct reasoning and good sense to leave a doubt upon our minds of his sincerity, or to permit us to suppose that the views he holds are other than those of Molière himself—this is Béralde, the brother of the Malade.

Moved by the miseries Argan is inflicting on his family in consequence of his blind submission to the cajoleries of his wife, and the *secundem artem* treatment of the doctors and apothecaries, Béralde takes the case in hand himself, exposes the fallacies of medicine, puts the medical luminaries to flight, and for a moment succeeds in rousing the patient from the grasp of fixed ideas. It is not without much skilful reasoning the position is won. In the discussion, the obstinate Argan forces his adversary to what may justly be considered a calm and dispassionate confession of Molière's views with reference to the healing art. Baffled in the argument, the Malade testily assails him with the question, "You do not believe in medicine, then?" The charge is too direct to be avoided, and Béralde gravely gives him his opinion. He proceeds thus: "So far from believing it to be true, my dear brother, between you and me I hold it to be one of the greatest of human follies, and looking at things philosophically I can see nothing more ridiculous, or of greater mummery, than a man professing to cure another of his ailments . . . . and for this simple reason, the springs of our corporeal machine are so mysterious that men can neither see nor understand their operations. Nature has drawn a veil before our eyes too thick for sense to penetrate. . . . . And as to what is to be done when one is sick? simply nothing, it is only necessary to seek repose. Nature, if we leave her to herself, will quickly relieve us of the disorders into which we may have fallen. It is our uneasiness and impatience that spoil

everything; almost all men die of their remedies, not their diseases. . . . Throughout all time there have existed among men beautiful chimeras, which are readily believed because they flatter us, and because it is to be wished they were true. When a doctor speaks to you of aiding, succouring, or soothing nature, of removing that which offends, and supplying that which is deficient, of invigorating and restoring the system to the right use of its functions; when he speaks to you of purifying the blood, regulating the spleen, strenthening the liver, fortifying the chest, regulating the bowels, fortifying the heart, restoring or preserving the natural heat, and of his having the secret of prolonging life, he is simply relating to you the romance of medicine. When you come to consult truth and experience, you will find nothing of all this, it is like a beautiful vision in our dreams, which on awakening leaves only the disappointment of finding that, alas! we believed it to be true."

To all this reasoning men generally take exception, but there is at least one who, though seriously ill, accepts and acts upon it—this is Molière himself. Though never believing blindly in the prescriptions of the physicians like an Argan, it is not until he has tried everything that art could do for him that he holds firm to this conclusion. Wearied with fruitless efforts and despairing of recovery, he abandons medicine and hope together. It is then that he declares through Béralde "that he would be wiser than the doctors, for he would not ask their help; and judging from the heroic nature of their treatment we can

readily excuse him. As he affirmed, "It is only the robust who have the strength to bear their remedies and maladies together; as for himself, he had scarcely force enough to bear disease alone."

In tracing with care the closing years of Molière's life, we have had the wreck his health presented to us. When the Malade Imaginaire was penned his state had reached its worst, and M. Raynaud, perhaps, is justified in his surmise that at this time he possessed the feelings of one who has had recourse to science and finding no relief, loses all cherished illusions, strives to rise superior to his weakness, but finally yielding to discouragement, becomes defiant, and with an effort, offers as a subject of amusement the sad secret which weighs upon his heart. It may be also, that in seeing his portrait in "Élomire" he recognised with that loyalty of conscience which is characteristic of the truly great, that the thrust of his antagonist was just, and would flout his miseries in the laughable impersonation of the hopeless Argan. Nor need this interpretation take us by surprise; the character is common to the highest efforts of Molière's genius. Melancholic, he brings the Misanthrope upon the stage no less eloquently to plead his heart-felt sorrows, enslaved by the charms of a giddy woman quite unworthy of him, and ashamed of the passion which he feels, he would be silent, Alceste makes known the story of his weakness, and we have it all before us in those scenes of jealously which charm us with their mingled play of grief and mirth so true to nature.

It is the same sentiment at once personal and collec-

tive that pervades the Malade Imaginaire. The Malade would seem to be one who cherishes life and fears to lose it, one in whom a stronger feeling than credulity predominates—that of the natural instinct of self-preservation. Carried to excess, it has become a mania, and shows itself the most tyrannical and egotistical of the passions. Without the fear of death, Argan would be an ordinary *bourgeois*, but it exists, and he becomes the greatest of domestic despots, sacrifices the happiness of his children to a foolish phantasy, and, with a childish cowardice, humbles himself before the prescriptions of M. Purgon and the clysters of M. Fleurant, the apothecary. Notwithstanding all this, he excites the deepest sympathy, for he is in reality a cruel sufferer. Imaginary suffering becomes suffering in reality, and such is hypochondria, the malady the most implacable—one which defies all remedies—for it takes entire possession of the mind, and superadds the power of creating misery without end.

Though rich in comic fancy, how real is the drama this favourite comedy unfolds; it is a performance familiar and poignant, where the principal actor, author, and victim takes his life for a success in laying bare the most incurable of human miseries—that of utter hopelessness in the strong attachment to existence. It is precisely because the Malade Imaginaire is a work so passionate and full of the sad experiences and presentiments of Molière himself, that it is less difficult than would at first appear to find in it a frank solution of his sentiments. If his decisions on

the point of medicine may seem to some uncertain or obscure, in the absence of a clearer declaration of what he really thought, we, at least, learn what he felt; after all it is dying men that the question more especially concerns.

XXII.

A DISAPPOINTED but observing mind has defined medicine as an art that sometimes cures, often kills, and generally consoles. At the risk of giving offence to learned colleagues, it must be candidly confessed that its army of reformers, past and present, have been able to modify but little the trite conclusion. Though meant to be amusing rather than severe, the charge instituted is hard to controvert. The modern hierophants have laid aside the cap and robe that charm the pit and gallery, they mouth less Latin, and are more sparing with the lancet and enema, but query, do they see into their work more clearly? The very cap and robe, abandoned, formed a large part of the consolation derivable.

In the preceding section we have seen how much the *comique* plays upon this element of uncertainty. Naturally the judgment is not final, and demands some little comment. To put it simply, the vested interests of the lancet and the stage apart, has the utility of medicine serious claims on our acceptance? The question may seem startling to patients and practi-

tioners; medicine, however, has little to fear from criticism, no matter from what source it comes; a necessity of our nature and nursling of our faith, it is twin with suffering, and will last as long. A re-examination of this point so delicate may therefore profitably engage an *entr'acte.*

Hitherto the chief objection urged against the healing art is, that it is conjectural. The point need hardly be debated; to raise the question it would be well to ask ourselves if there is any art that is not so to some extent. This may not be flattering to medicine, but history and science alike demonstrate that it can rank no higher. Thus far its claims may be justly admitted. And this is no disparagement; modern medicine is as much a thing of yesterday as any other of the positive sciences to which it is allied. As a system of the past, and altogether fabulous, how remarkable was its cohesion! Unable, however, to escape the fate prepared for it by the partial revolt of Paracelsus and Van Helmont, by Harvey's grand discovery, and especially by the intellectual emancipation of the eighteenth century, the Hippocratic and Galenic theories gradually lost their hold. Bichat, transforming general anatomy and physiology, demonstrated in the structural elements specific vital properties, disposed of elementary qualities, faculties, and such-like fancies of antiquity, leaving nothing but some valueless details. Broussais followed, and to him belongs the incontestable honour of bringing pathology definitely within the domains of physiology. He thus ruined for ever the classic notions of the essentiality of maladies,

the hypothesis of morbid entities, and so upset the imaginary barrier that divides health from disease—conditions whose phenomena are continuous and inseparable.

The Claude Bernards and Bois Raymonds familiarise us with the latter facts. But while the nature of disease is made so manifest, it seems surprising that its management should still retain its mystery; for it ought to be remembered that in the recent marvellous advancement in everything associated with science, by general consent medicine itself—that is, therapeutics—must be excepted; here the hypothetic elements still reign paramount, and meet with more than due respect. To the uninitiated this may appear incredible; it is, however, clearly evident that since Molière's time, and for twenty centuries before that, its speculative character has remained the same, hygiene and antidotes to poisons excepted. During that mighty interval, systems passing from one extreme to the other have perpetually vacillated between violent dogmatism and weak expectancy moving in a pernicious or illusory circle of *isms*, *ologies*, and *pathies*.

Our poet was witness of a phase perhaps the most redoubtable the history of medicine presents. Next to disease itself nothing could be more deplorable, and all might be summed up as the undisputed reign of vile empiricism, blind faith in authority, an absence of rational measures, a deluge of horrible purgative formulæ, and the shedding of blood in torrents. This sweeping censure surgery, being then unrecognised,

alone escapes. In the royal patient, Louis XIV., we have seen its underrated practical licentiates at their work. Compare the surgeon Félix with d'Aquin; with what certainty the former operates for fistula, how promptly he reduces the luxation of the elbow-joint. Vallot, blundering on dogmatic principles, bleeds five times in the attack of small-pox, nine times in the *maladie de Calais*—a common typhoid fever—on which occasion he triumphantly exclaims, "When nature unaided was impotent to save, how marvellous was our treatment—such is the excellence of our art."

Could anything meant to be humane be more appalling? But the comedy "is there," as Beaumarchais has it, "to make us laugh in order that we may not weep." Perhaps Molière in his satire forced the point of scepticism beyond due limits, but the stage might justify this exaggeration. In any case the sentiment was shortly destined to find a genuine echo in the school itself. Had he lived a little later, he would have found some master-minds who quite agreed with him. He, nowhere in his theatre, exposes more explicitly medical illusions than does one of the greatest authorities of the following century. This distinguished teacher, from the professorial chair, declared, "I grant that medicine has rendered signal service to suffering humanity, in affording consolation by flattering hopes that prove too often vain. But it must be admitted this is far from raising it to the rank of a natural science, and for the simple reason that it puts it on a level with astrology

superstition, and every kind of charlatanism. So long as its principles do not lead the immense majority of practitioners to anything approaching unanimity as to the means of treatment, or show them to be generally successful in their application, medicine cannot be regarded as a genuine science or more useful than injurious to mankind." Such is one example of the many candid attestations of celebrities grown hoary in the practice and study of the healing art.

But doubt is not a thing of yesterday. Since the sage of Cos wrote—he who in a mood of modesty, if not discouragement, scarcely becoming a deity, declared that "art is long, life is short"—scepticism has always dogged the current of theory or practice in vogue. While positive criteria were wanting, such sentiments could lead to nothing, and consequently science cannot justly be charged with its misfortunes. Now, however, all is changed. It is long since such an obstacle could be advanced as an apology. A method of experiment having simply truth for its object, should now no longer be delayed. Ere this, medical therapeutics should have been submitted to a critical examination as severe as that which philosophy has received at the hands of Auguste Comte. By such an operation radical, but at the same time salutary, it would have laid aside much of its extravagant pretension, and would have found a sphere more legitimate and exact, which, if narrower, would be at least undisputed. Until the present, medicine either as a science, art, or profession, has only had

detractors, or apologists, believers or rejectors; in a controversial spirit it has only been defended or attacked—there has been no judgment passed. But where is the master capable of sifting or disposed to sift the facts and fictions of its therapeutic systems, past and present? Can we expect to find him in the chair of any school or college? Wherever he may be he ought now to show himself. The question should no longer be left to the decisions of the Argans and Béraldes of the comedy; as for the Purgons, their *esprit-de-corps* and vested interests put them out of court.

Until the claims of nature and art, in the cure of disease, receive the attention of competent authorities, there is no alternative but to rest content with moderate professional views. As things at present stand between belief and incredulity, truth, perhaps, is very equally divided. Making all allowances for objections on the plea of medical fallacies and defects, we may be duly warranted in insisting on the fact that no one is justified, not even Molière himself, to declare in the name of reason the impossibility of curing or alleviating human maladies; such a statement is extreme. Systems may be as numerous as our forms of faith, but that there are some at least which contain a grain of truth we are well assured; again, as all are more or less consoling, what good could result by depriving humanity of such a source of blessing? So long as systems and their measures are not positively dangerous, there is nothing better to be offered to mankind. To assert with the comedian

that the active powers of our corporeal systems are mysterious and beyond our comprehension, are statements no one calls in question, but is that really any sufficient reason for concluding that means for the relief and cure of disease must always be beyond our reach? Experience proves the contrary. Though the power is much more limited than could be desired, or is generally believed to be, something can be done, and is done daily, remedially in mitigation of our sufferings.

Naturally the doctors, and their patients too, aver that the dramatist is wrong and prejudiced in his views. Molière's scepticism may not be unworthy of his genius, but even admitting the weakness of human nature and the uncertainty of the art, perhaps it is better to be wrong with Argan than right with Béralde. It is easy to assert with the latter "that when a man is sick all that is necessary is to trust to Nature," but when speaking thus, Béralde is in the enjoyment of health; should he fall ill, like the rest of the world, Molière excepted, it is more than probable he would agree with his brother the Malade, that after all the doctors ought to be the best informed in the matter. He might find a means of escaping the *secundum artem* treatment, but at all events he would have his medical adviser. It might be a man of liberal mind, like the comedian's own, who could laugh with him at the strange and violent abuses of what was meant to be beneficent and solacing, still he would be cared for, and though contrary to the forms, so much the more to his advantage.

What was termed Hippocratic treatment presented little to alarm; it was the humouralistic measures —bleeding and purgation—carried to excess that were mischievous. The current theory of depletion justified interferences that are horrible to chronicle; never did the Doctor Sangrado of Le Sage or the most ardent followers of Broussais and physiological medicine shed such torrents of blood as the medical worthies of Molière's epoch. Their enemies might reproach them with an aversion to progress, but the Faculty could glory in the conquest of repeated bleedings, and woe to any member who abjured it altogether! Guy Patin writes: "De Labrosse," a physician like himself, "has died unbled; it was proposed to him, but he refused; it was a remedy, said he of sanguinary pedants, and he preferred to die without it. May the devil bleed him in the other world, the impostor—the atheist!" Such are the maledictions and invectives for any man who refuses to die according to the rules! What could be more comical? Molière has nothing so truly ludicrous in all his philippics.

After all it may be held that even in the Malade Imaginaire it is not so much with the art or profession, as the methodists or those who practised it that Molière offers to do battle; and even for the professors themselves, while we accept his estimate, we are not bound to judge them irrespective of the times in which they lived; their errors and absurdities will admit of apology, and who could well refuse them the benefit of all extenuating circumstances? Perhaps the

greatest offence with which we can charge them was the absolute confidence they inspired; the more ridiculous and hollow is their science, the more must we commiserate the poor unfortunate sufferer who looked on them as oracles, and hesitated to move without consulting them. It is here the critique acquires another sort of grandeur, which we shall henceforth analyse, and which will show that it is with our doctors as with our saints—when they cease to claim our faith we cease to call on them for aid.

XXIII.

THE theory and practice of medicine, as we have seen, have not exhausted Molière's resource of criticism; the ethics of medicine also have their comic version. The hardest blow he strikes is conveyed in the shrewd advice he gives to doctors. Though showing an audacity that would require a mask for its delivery, it must humbly be admitted that there has never been a time in the history of medicine in which the principles he lays down have altogether been ignored; he reminds us of the fact and we forgive him.

In spite of the revolution in ideas, manners, and institutions, which have taken place in France, as elsewhere, within the last two centuries, that which has changed the least in medicine is the profession

itself. If medicine is an evil, it is at all events a necessary one. So long as innovations spare disease, and poor humanity suffers from it, we must continue to accept and encourage in the general interest the art which has for its object its prevention, and remedy, if possible, when present. The medical profession occupies a position peculiar and distinct from that of other professional bodies. The position the practitioner holds with reference to society and its interests is of a neutral character. Cultivating a heterogeneous *clientèle* brings him into relation with every grade of society; he sees all, hears all, but keeps his own counsel; he is at once a friend and a confidant, never a judge. But besides this, for the members of the old school, as well as of the new, there were questions between patients, as also between professional brethren themselves, delicate and difficult to observe; such as questions of fees, prescriptions, consultations—the latter more especially. To struggle against illegal rivals, for instance, the first thing to be done was to refuse alliance with them, and we have yet to learn that any member of the Faculty was ever wanting in that respect; the crime would have been followed by immediate expulsion from the corps of orthodoxy. But is it to be imagined that the comedy was wrong, and that even among friends there was never unseemly quarrel and contention? This would imply ignorance of their ways, and, we may add, a want of knowledge of the human heart. In this respect Molière is quite in the right, and the picture he bequeaths of petty medical vanities, jealousies, and

rivalries does not apply to his time only, but to all time; consequently it behoves us in witnessing the scenes so invariably true of our infirmities, to study them and correct them if we can.

If Molière paints our shortcomings as being so inconvenient to patients, and so little creditable to a learned profession, from the nature of things he also knows that they must always exist, and with a characteristic irony, he provides a remedy for the evil. Should the comic doctors take to quarrelling there is the sage M. Filerin to reconcile and counsel them in the name of their common interests. The celebrated physician of L'Amour Médecin, who is made to play a somewhat allegorical *rôle*, is probably intended to personify the united wisdom of the Faculty. He appears upon the scene shortly after the amusing consultation in the case of Sganarelle's daughter in L'Amour Médecin, where the poor parent has been left a prey to despair by the riotous difference of opinion as to the propriety of instantaneous bleeding, or of the prompt administration of the emetic. M. Filerin meets, as it were by accident, Doctors Tomé and Desfonandrées, still heated by the contest, and, with all the grave authority of a senior of the order, he forthwith proceeds to admonish them on the subject of their injudicious conduct. The tone which he assumes is *naïveté* itself, and assuredly of all the passages presented to us by Molière's medical comedies, this is one of the finest. But the quarrels of the members of the Faculty were not always so easily arranged; this was private and between friends and members of the

Faculty—and this made all the difference. Had the proposal emanated from an enemy in the shape of an outside practitioner, the most ardent partisan of blood-letting would have sooner swallowed the emetic himself than consent to see it given under any circumstances.

The brevity and exquisite humour of the address, so admirably suited to the comicality of the situation, is a sufficient passport to the terrible vein of critical irony which it contains. One may also clearly perceive that it is rather Molière than Filerin who here so confidentially disburdens his mind. To conceive of genuine members of the Faculty giving expression to sentiments so inconsistent with their character would be chimerical; it might even be affirmed that nothing could be farther from their views. If there were a quality with which they might be more justly reproached than another, it would be especially that of being *medécins du tête au pied*, as Molière himself elsewhere expresses it; and of having neither doubts nor scruples, and believing in the rules of Hippocrates as in the sacred text of holy writ itself, their faults would show black enough without adding that of hypocrisy. In all their errors they were sincere, and this is, perhaps, the best and worst that can be advanced on their behalf.

By some the *rôle* of Filerin has been taken seriously, and the question has been asked—should not some reserve be made? In the general estimate may it not require correction? All comic latitude allowed, the sentiments of the grave discourser may doubtless be

disputed, but surely the depth of humour, together with the drollery of the associations, pardon or at least palliate those principles he so reverentially insists the profession should observe. We must bear in mind that the profession has always had its mercenary phase, and that to a certain class of minds, existing now as ever, his premises are neither odious nor objectionable. It may be presumed, however, that the mass of the present medical generation are sufficiently advanced to candidly accept them in their proper light. Those deserve pity who are not prepared to appreciate the philosophy and wit that they convey, without offence, fearing that their dignity and vested interests are unpleasantly assailed.

XXIV.

BEFORE concluding our study, there is a final subject which it would be unjust to omit, one in which every student will naturally feel interested, that is, what Molière's medical contemporaries thought of him.

Making due allowance for the age in which he lived, and laying aside *esprit-de-corps*, it would be curious to know the general impression of the members of the Faculty regarding his personality and genius. Unhappily on this point we are reduced to the slenderest conjectures. A century had passed away before the poet's biographers and critics were seized with the mania of collecting everything relating to his life.

Since then the fund has vastly accumulated; and if among the mass of incident and anecdote relating to the heroes of the lancet, much must be regarded as highly problematical or of pure invention, still the terrible protest of M. de Chalussay must to some extent be taken as conclusive evidence of the enmity he had raised. This manifestation of offended dignity, however, stands alone; the production, it is generally maintained by those best competent to judge, and not without some show of reason, betrays more of literary jealousy than professional offence. At all events Molière himself—he was quite sufficiently interested in the question to know what offence implied—informs us in his preface to Tartuffe, "that the doctors have submitted with amiability to our representation, and, like the public, appear to have been amused with the exhibition that was made of them." This of itself might prove little, but it seems strengthened by the fact that no notable scandal was ever excited by the comedies, and certainly no legal prosecution for defamation raised, for there is a total absence of any trace of such a circumstance in the records of the Faculty.

From the perfect silence in this respect it is evident the mass of the physicians were indifferent to the theatrical performances, or the growing opinion they did so much to encourage. It would be wrong, however, to credit these worthy men of science with more forbearance than was justly due. It is possible they were ignorant of the part they were made to play, and of the manner in which they were ridiculed. The

suggestion may seem improbable, but the times, with all its fashions and usages, must be remembered. The spirit of etiquette and class proprieties was much more rigid then than now; the physician, like the magistrate, would have risked esteem and reputation by visiting the theatre, the pastime was too frivolous for men of gravity and of civil note. Guy Patin was undoubtedly a strict observer of the rule, but then, as Dean of the Faculty, and marvellously *au courant* with the gossip of the day, he is naturally the best informed of all his colleagues of what takes place concerning them. He knows of the comedian Molière and the manner in which he parodies the doctors on the stage; still, throughout his correspondence there is not a single remark that breathes offence or animosity. Indeed, so little is his curiosity excited on a matter which so much interests the public, that the only reflection which escapes him is rather favourable than otherwise. He writes, "They say he ridicules the doctors who kill the people with impunity." But this is quite in confidence and in his usual satiric vein; no one can be more jealous of the dignity and honour of that corporation he so admirably represents.

If Patin and his colleagues were aware of what was actually taking place and displayed no protest, we may easily imagine various causes for their silence. As has often been remarked, comedies are somewhat like the sermon which the wicked listen to under the safeguard of a strong *amour-propre;* the accusations that tell upon the ear we have a marvellous faculty of applying to our friends and seldom to ourselves. In

like manner the doctors may have found themselves quite naturally chiming in with the chorus of the satirist, for the simple reason that the attacks conveyed were obviously intended for opponents. Patin, like the majority of his fraternity, in all probability found it excellent to know that certain members of the parent corps were singled out for castigation—and especially the Court physicians, who formed a clique apart, and might easily be assailed without directly implicating the mass, and particularly his own party. It is even possible that he and others felt satisfied that Molière was only aiding in the defence of the good cause, and that there was consequently little to complain of. In any case there is no reason for suspecting that he and the more enlightened or influential of the profession sympathised with those in whose interests the author of Élomire penned his violent philippic—for it can scarcely be denied that this writer represented the feelings of a certain professional section, though neither numerous nor important.

However this may be, the Médecin Vengé, with all the mystery that involves its origin, is the only source of information relating to the question. While attaching no more value to the work than it really possesses —for it is in every way unworthy the parentage or sanction of a learned body—we are forced to see in it a most remarkable commentary on much that forms the subject of our study. Where so much is still obscure, light from any quarter is welcome. For Boulanger de Chalussay its authorship earned more of infamy than fame. If he was actuated by per-

sonal enmity, never did a mean jealousy so prostitute literary merit. Such as it is, however, it tells us much about the man, and supplies us with the worst his enemies could say of him.

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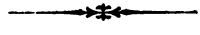

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